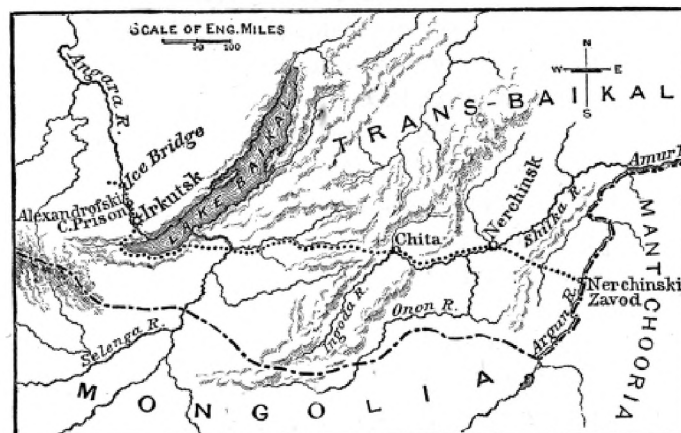
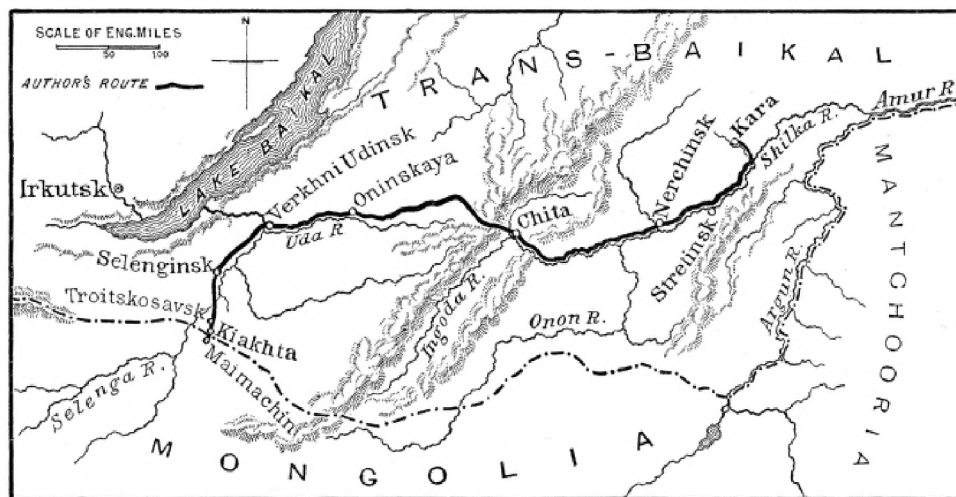
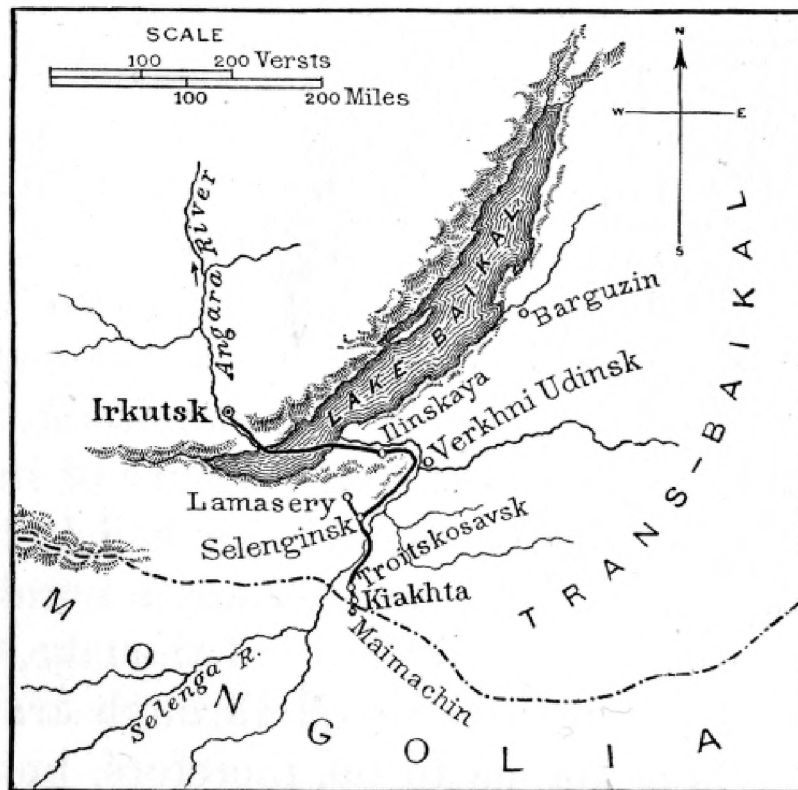


Appointment in Dauria: George Kennan, George Frost, and the Architectural Context

William C. Brumfield



(1) GATE CHURCH OF ARCHANGEL MICHAEL, TRINITY-SELENGINSK MONASTERY, SOUTH VIEW.
ALL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR IN 1999 AND 2000.



MAPS A-C. (FROM GEORGE KENNAN, *SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM*, 1891)

A: ROUTE FROM IRKUTSK TO KIAKHTA.

B: MAP OF ROUTE FROM TROITSKOSAVSK TO KARA.

C: ROUTE FROM NERCHINSKI ZAVOD TO THE ANGARA.

In the fall of 1885 George Kennan, together with the artist George Frost, traversed the vast territory of the Transbaikalian region as part of a project to collect information on the tsarist penal and exile system in Siberia. This material would form the basis of Kennan's fundamental work, *Siberia and the Exile System*, published in 1891. Although Kennan was a devoted student of Russian history and culture, the shattering impact of Kennan's descriptions, as well as his active lecture campaigns in support of Russian exiles, would have a significant effect on American perceptions of the tsarist regime.¹

Nonetheless, *Siberia and the Exile System* is not solely a determined study of the Siberian penal system. In tandem with Kennan's primary purpose, the book has passages that cross into the realm of the travel account, albeit under extreme conditions. With appealing candor Kennan tells of their decision to take a break from the severe, if noble, task and travel to observe the territory and the people who live within it:

... we decided to make a detour to the southward from Verkni Udinsk, for the purpose of visiting Kiakhtha, the Mongolian frontier-town of Maimachin, and the great Buddhist lamasery of Goose Lake. We were tired of prisons and the exile system; we had had misery enough for a while; and it seemed to me that we should be in better condition to bear the strain of the mines if we could turn our thoughts temporarily into other channels and travel a little, as boys say, "for fun."² (See Appendix A.)

It will soon be clear that "fun" is entirely relative, and even during this segment of the trip there are meetings and discussions with political exiles. Nonetheless, Kennan in large measure holds to his temporary pledge to observe a part of Siberia beyond the exile system. The itinerary of this segment, briefly indicated in the quotation above, began in Irkutsk, a city that played an important role on many levels in Kennan's Siberian odyssey.³

From Irkutsk Kennan and Frost proceeded to the port of Listvianka, where they took a small steamer across Lake Baikal to Boyarskaia (Boyarskii) near the mouth of the Selenga River. (See map A.) From there they traveled up the left bank of the Selenga River valley to the post station at Ilinskaia (Ilinka). Bypassing Verkhneudinsk (now Ulan-Ude), Kennan and Frost proceeded to what Kennan calls Selenginsk, at which point they made a detour to the renowned Goose Lake (Gusinoe Ozero) lamasery, also known as the Tamchinskii *datsan*. After the visit to the *datsan*, which clearly fascinated Kennan, they returned to Selenginsk and from there made their way to Kiakhtha, the most important Russian border crossing into Mongolia. After an extended stay in the

Kiakhtha settlements, they returned to Selenginsk, and thence via Chita to Nerchinsk—not to be confused with the notorious Nerchinsk mines, located in the same area but at a different location some considerable distance from the town itself. The mines and their abuses occupy a large part of Kennan's study. From Nerchinsk, they returned via Chita to Irkutsk.

It is not my purpose to give commentary on the details of Kennan's trip. That commentary has been provided by other specialists.⁴ Rather, my intention is to present a view of the architecture and historical background of the settlements through which Kennan and Frost pass. In order to orient the reader to Kennan's book, I have provided an appendix containing relevant passages from his narrative. Kennan generally gives only cursory attention to buildings along the route, and that attention is frequently devoted to the wretched conditions of post stations and local hotels. Yet, as will be seen below, there are exceptions that engage his interest.

Furthermore, George Frost often conveyed substantial architectural detail in his sketches, which were subsequently reproduced as engravings in the 1891 Century edition of *Siberia and the Exile System*. These engravings (and accompanying maps) will serve as a complement to my own photographs, taken in 1999 and 2000 during travel in the same area with support provided by the Library of Congress as part of the "Meeting of Frontiers" project. Russian colleagues and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation also provided essential organizational assistance.⁵ I am equally indebted to long-term support from the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Washington, DC, which maintains archival material on George Kennan's trips. Although my travel was by no means as arduous as Kennan's, it was a far from simple task.

Beyond Baikal

The Siberian territory through which Kennan and Frost traveled during their "detour" is traditionally referred to as Dauria, after the Daur people, a Mongolic ethnic group. This vast space—now generally known as Transbaikalia, or Zabaikalia—extends from the Baikal area to the Mongolian border in the south and reaches the Amur River in the east.

During the middle of the seventeenth century, Russian expansion in this area was facilitated by a network of rivers extending from west to east beyond Baikal. These rivers include the westward flowing Khilok, which meets the Selenga River near the eastern shore of Baikal, but has its origins far to the east, on the north flank of the upper Yablonovyi Range near the city of Chita. To the south of the Yablonovyi Range, the eastward flowing Ingoda empties into the Shilka, which in turn merges with the Amur at the northern Manchurian border. As Cossacks,

fur traders, and fugitive peasants moved into this seemingly boundless space, the Muscovite government, faced with frequent wars along its borders in the west, struggled to establish its authority in eastern Siberia.⁶

The initial development of Russian settlements in the area to the south and east of Lake Baikal began in the middle of the seventeenth century. At this early stage Cossacks and *sluzhilye liudi* (expedition members paid by the state treasury) explored new trading routes to China and, more immediately, sought tribute in the form of furs (particularly sable) from local populations such as the Buriats and the Tungus.

The earliest Russian fort (*ostrog*) in this great territory was founded in 1648 on an arm of the Barguzin River, some forty kilometers from the eastern shore of Lake Baikal. The Barguzinsk fort was initially subordinate to the *voevoda* (military governor) in Yeniseisk, who at that time was the colorful, ruthless Afanasii Pashkov. For a few years Barguzinsk served as the de facto center of Russian expansion beyond Baikal. In 1654 Moscow designated Pashkov as the *voevoda* of the new administrative territory of Dauria, and in the following year he set forth with a group of Cossacks and others (including the exiled Archpriest Avvakum) far beyond Barguzinsk to found a settlement that would become known as Nerchinsk.⁷

Although Barguzinsk exists as a small town to this day, the direction of Russian settlement in western Transbaikalia quickly shifted to the south, along the more convenient Selenga River (Figure A). The Selenga, which originates in Mongolia and is the main river emptying into the eastern shore of Lake Baikal, served from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries as a major conduit for Russian trade and settlement towards the east.

A major proclamation of the Russian presence near the mouth of the Selenga was the Trinity-Selenginsk

Monastery, founded at the command in 1681 of Tsar Fedor Alekseevich, who intended to establish an outpost for Orthodox missionary activity in Dauria. Kennan does not mention this historic and imposing monastery, whose earliest masonry buildings date from the late eighteenth century (figures 1-3). Indeed, Kennan displays little interest in Russian Orthodoxy in this book.

Verkhneudinsk

The first significant town on Kennan's itinerary beyond Lake Baikal is Verkhneudinsk, to which he gives only passing mention. (See appendix B.) Yet the importance of its history and architectural heritage warrants a place at the beginning of our study.

Russian pioneers in the seventeenth century soon understood that the primary strategic location on the Selenga was its confluence with the Uda River, and at that site, on a bluff above the merging rivers, the fort of Udinsk was established in October 1665 as a wintering outpost (*zimov'ye*).⁸ During the final decades of the seventeenth century the size of the fort expanded despite the nominal superiority of the Selenginsk fort (see below), located closer to the Chinese border. The Treaty of Nerchinsk, concluded between Russia and China in 1689, required Russian withdrawal from large areas along the Amur River but led to increased stability for the remaining Russian settlements such as Udinsk, which benefitted from trade as well as high-level diplomatic travel to China.⁹ A sign of that stability was the settlement's first church, built of logs in 1696 and dedicated to the Most Merciful Savior.

The importance of Verkhneudinsk ("Upper Udinsk"; now known as Ulan-Ude) derived equally from its role as the administrative center of the western Transbaikalia region and from its position on one of the primary oriental trade routes, from Irkutsk to the towns of Kiakhtinskaia Sloboda and Troitskosavsk on the Mongolian border. The role of the Udinsk settlement as a grain distribution point also increased. By 1780 the town had two annual trade fairs, in late winter and midsummer.

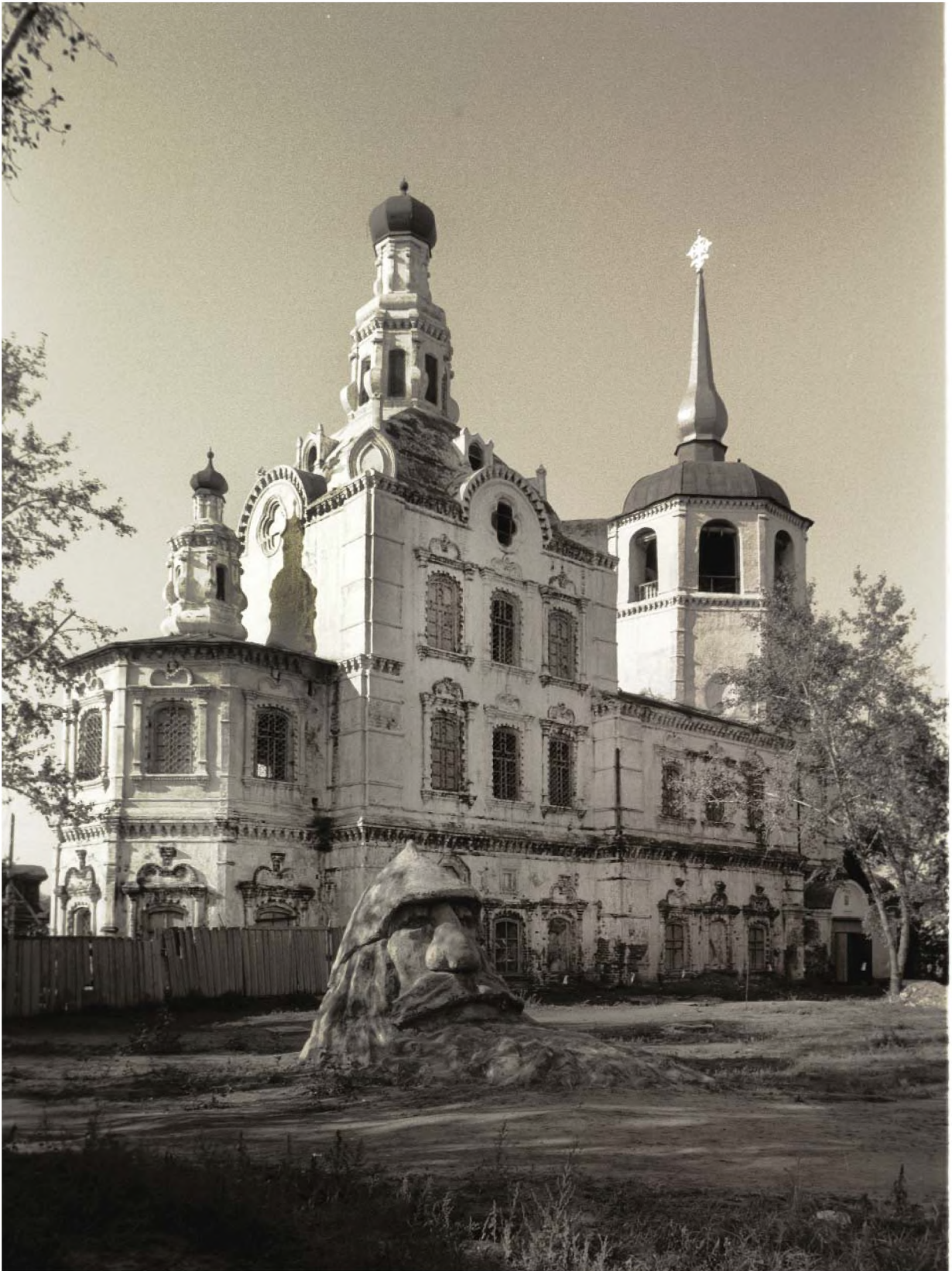
The expanding economic activity of Verkhneudinsk enabled the completion, after several delays, of the town's first large masonry church, the Cathedral of the Hodigitria Icon of the Mother of God (figure 4), begun in 1741 at the site of a log church from the beginning of the eighteenth century. In a pattern typical of brick church construction in the Russian north—from Tot'ma and Solikamsk to Yeniseisk and Irkutsk—the structure was erected in two stages. The lower church (for use in the winter) was completed in 1770, with an altar dedicated to the Epiphany. The upper church, with the main altar dedicated to the Hodigitria icon, was consecrated only in 1785.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, the basic design and the exterior detail of the Cathedral of the Hodigitria Icon



(A) SELENGA RIVER AND VALLEY.



(2) WALLS AND SOUTHEAST CORNER TOWER, TRINITY-SELENGINSK MONASTERY, SOUTHEAST VIEW.
(3) TRINITY CHURCH (SOBOR), TRINITY-SELENGINSK MONASTERY, SOUTH VIEW. AT THE TIME OF THIS PHOTOGRAPH, THE MONASTERY WAS IN USE AS AN INSANE ASYLUM.



(4) CATHEDRAL OF HODEGETRIA ICON OF MOTHER OF GOD, NORTHEAST VIEW.

suggest connections with earlier churches in the Irkutsk area: the Church of the Miraculous Icon of the Savior in Irkutsk (1706-1710, with bell tower from 1758-1762); the Church of the Miraculous Icon of the Savior at Urik (1775); and the Church of Archangel Michael (Saint Kharlampii) in Irkutsk.¹¹

In view of the fact that the upper part of the Hodigitria Cathedral was not begun until after 1770, its style can be related to the “Siberian baroque” characteristic of other monuments from the 1770s. The arched pediments over the windows and the articulated window surrounds (figure 5) are characteristic of church design from the Urals eastward, at a time when neoclassicism had already assumed dominance in the area between Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Additional baroque features include the volutes bracing the drums beneath the main and altar cupolas, as well as the oval windows at the roofline. The large bell tower at the west end of the cathedral conforms to the usual octagonal shape, with a large covered stairway and porch descending from the upper level of the cathedral. Entrance to the lower, winter church was from portals on the left and right facades on the ground level of the bell tower. A similar plan and decorative style were applied on a smaller scale to the town’s second masonry church, the Most Merciful Savior, built in 1786-1800 to replace the log church of the same name. The Savior Church was demolished during the 1930s.¹²

Like other Russian provincial towns during the reign of Catherine the Great, Verkhneudinsk was provided with a highly ordered city grid plan, approved in 1793.¹³ Although the plan was modified in 1839, many of its features remain in contemporary Ulan-Ude. At the same time Catherinian neoclassicism was largely absent in Verkhneudinsk, as elsewhere in eastern Siberia.

By the turn of the nineteenth century neoclassicism had become the dominant form for church architecture in the Transbaikal region. One of the earliest examples, with lingering traces of provincial baroque, is the Church of the Trinity (figure 6) built in 1798-1809 as the third masonry temple in Verkhneudinsk. A relatively simple, low-pitched structure, with secondary altars on either side of the vestibule and a bell tower at the west end, the Church of the Trinity is a typical example of modest parish architecture in eastern Siberia.¹⁴ At the same time, the location of this cemetery church on a promontory to the east of the town’s main market created an effective visual point of reference, rivaling the larger Hodigitria Cathedral.

Neoclassical design was also applied to the town’s primary commercial buildings: the Trading Rows and the facing Merchants Court, both built of brick. The latter building was launched in 1803 by an assembly of merchants who commissioned the Irkutsk architect Anton Losev (1765-1829) to design a quadrilateral

containing 196 trading stalls, a large interior courtyard, and an attached arcade to protect the shop entrances. Work began on the south (main) side Merchants Court in 1804, but professional intrigues and a lack of financing halted construction until 1825. The south half was finally completed in 1830 (figure 7), although the cornice details and iron roof were not added until 1856.¹⁵ The north half of the project was never built; its site was taken by a more modest structure known as the Small Trading Rows (not extant). The surviving south half has been restored to contemporary use as a bazaar, and the details of its rusticated arcade and entrance arch have survived reasonably well.

The nearby Trading Rows display a similarly utilitarian neoclassical style, although its center is occupied by a more imposing two-story structure, defined by a portico of eight paired Corinthian columns and a balcony (figure 8). Built in the early 1830s with the support of a wealthy merchant, Mitrofan Kurbatov, the Trading Rows had far less rentable space than the Merchants Court (only sixteen shops), but served well to project the prestige and wealth of the Kurbatov family. Even the one-story extensions on either side of the main building were marked by a row of Ionic columns that supported a flat roof over the walkway extending the length of the structure.¹⁶

Apart from the few churches and major administrative and commercial buildings, most of merchant Verkhneudinsk was characterized by log houses, with or without plank siding, and often decorated with carved window surrounds (figures 9, 10). Some of the more elaborate examples, such as the house on Pochtamt Street, No. 22 (figure 11), constructed around 1900, are a tour-de-force of decorative art.¹⁷ But unlike the large wooden houses of Tomsk, the dwellings in central Verkhneudinsk tended to be of one story, occasionally with a small attic level visible from the back.

A number of these wooden dwellings, as well as a substantial part of the new brick commercial buildings in Verkhneudinsk, belong to members of a burgeoning local Jewish community. Although much research remains to be done in this area, it should be noted that many Jews were able to escape restrictions applied in the western part of the Russian empire by moving to the Transbaikal area, where their skills and enterprise were much needed. To be sure, the Imperial bureaucracy’s regulations and restrictions on Jewish property ownership and residence beyond the Pale of Settlement still existed, yet they were applied in a contradictory, haphazard fashion in Siberia, where the desire for an investment of capital and talent ensured a modicum of protection and stability. As a recent monograph on the topic notes:



(5) CATHEDRAL OF HODEGETRIA ICON OF MOTHER OF GOD, SE VIEW



(6) CHURCH OF THE TRINITY, EAST VIEW



(7) MERCHANTS COURT (GOSTINYI DVOR).
(8) TRADING ROWS (TORGOVYE RIADY), MAIN PORTICO



(9) VTORUSHIN HOUSE, BAZANOV STREET.

(10) OVSIANKIN HOUSE, KOMMUNISTICHESKAIA STREET 12 AND SVERDLOV STREET.



(11) WOODEN HOUSE, ORIGINALLY AT POCHTAMSKAIA STREET 22.

[Jewish merchants] deliberately began with small enterprises and workshops of one or two workers and a rapid turnover of money. These were designed for the quick and painless curtailing of work in case of expulsion from the town. The process of financial investment by Jewish merchants in the sphere of production stabilized only when there appeared the certainty that a prolonged period of residence in a given settlement and the established reputation of a person as useful to the town, as well as the ownership of real estate, would serve as a definite—if not complete—guarantee against unpleasant surprises.¹⁸

When such conditions existed in the Transbaikal area at the turn of the twentieth century, Jewish investment grew not only in areas of production and the professions (particularly those related to medicine), but also in the area of real estate. The latter development is evident in the number of buildings constructed and owned by Jews in towns such as Verkhneudinsk and Chita (see below). In Verkhneudinsk, for example, a survey of the owners of buildings along the main Bolshaia Nikolaevskaia Street, and its extension, Bolshaia Street, contains names such as Elik Fleisher, Odessa Fleisher, Olga Gertman, Lazar Samsonovich, the Irkutsk merchants Judah, Aron, Moses and David Samsonovich, Isaiah and Jacob Tsygalnitskii, Naftolii Kapelman, David Merkel, Bassa Rozenshtein, Samuel Rozenshtein, and others.¹⁹ According to the 1897 census of the Russian Empire, Jews comprised slightly over 11 percent of the population of Verkhneudinsk (908 out of a total of 8,086).

Even though the structures built by Jews in Verkhneudinsk were nationalized with the establishment of Soviet power in Buriatiia after 1922, and most were subsequently modified or razed for later development, the record of Jewish building activity and investment during the two decades before 1917 is clear. The ultimate symbol of the Jewish community in Verkhneudinsk was

the synagogue, one of at least five officially-sanctioned prayer houses in the Transbaikal area.²⁰ Located a block from Bolshaia Nikolaevskaia Street on Bolshaia Naberezhnaia Street, the synagogue was built of brick in the early 1880s. All Jewish houses of worship were closed in the early Soviet period, however, and the Verkhneudinsk synagogue subsequently underwent modifications that largely obscured its original form, including the removal of a helmet-shaped dome over the central prayer area (figure 12). Indeed, a much better preserved synagogue can be found in the smaller town of Kabansk (on the Selenga River northwest of Ulan-Ude), which also had a substantial Jewish community (figure 13).²¹

Selenginsk

On their way south Kennan and Frost stopped overnight at the rough Selenginsk post station (appendix B), where they gained the services of a colorful local official who would serve as their guide to the Goose Lake lamasery. Although Kennan does not refer to it, the location of the Selenginsk settlement had a peripatetic history.

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Russia's unstable border with Mongolia was patrolled from the original fort of Selenginsk, founded in 1665 by Barguzinsk Cossacks on the upper (southern) reaches of the Selenga River.²² The Selenginsk fort (not to be confused with the Trinity-Selenginsk Monastery at the other end of the river) faced attacks from Mongolia, such as the siege of January-February 1688 by the forces of a Mongolian feudal lord whose forces were estimated at 5,000.²³ Indeed, the successful defense of Selenginsk, bolstered by the troops of the Russian envoy Fedor Golovin and the exiled Ukrainian hetman Demian Mnogogreshnyi, may have persuaded the Chinese not to demand further Russian concessions as part of the Treaty of Nerchinsk, signed the following year.

Despite its remote, exposed location, Selenginsk remained an important outpost, particularly after the establishment in 1704 of a shorter route for state caravans to China that led via Selenginsk to Mongolia, rather than through Nerchinsk and Manchuria.²⁴ Further development occurred following the death of Peter the Great (January 1725), when the Russian plenipotentiary Count Savva Lukich Vladislavich-Raguzinskii suggested attempts to relocate or improve the fort. Little came of the various projects and surveys, including one involving a reluctant Lieutenant Abraham Hannibal, great-grandfather of the poet Aleksandr Pushkin.²⁵ Indeed, treaties negotiated by Raguzinskii with the Chinese in 1727 obviated the need for extensive fortress expansion and led instead to the establishment by Raguzinskii of a



(12) FORMER SYNAGOGUE, ULAN UDE (WITH ADDITIONS FROM 1990S).
(13) FORMER SYNAGOGUE, KABANSK.



(14) SELENGA RIVER PANORAMA. VIEW SOUTHWEST TOWARD STAROSELENGINSK AND CATHEDRAL OF THE MIRACULOUS IMAGE OF THE SAVIOR



(15) TRINITY CHURCH (SOBOR), TRINITY-SELENGINSK MONASTERY, SOUTH VIEW.

flourishing border trading center known as *Kiakhtinskaia sloboda* (quarter).

With the stabilization of relations along the Mongolian border and the abolishing, in 1755, of the state caravan system for trade with China, Selenginsk gradually declined in importance, although it remained a local administrative center with a garrison. In 1780 two disastrous fires leveled most of the town, whose buildings, including its churches, were entirely of wood.

Nonetheless, a few years after the fire resources were found to build the imposing Cathedral of the Miraculous Image of the Savior (1783-89), the town's first masonry structure (figure 14). The design of the cathedral has been attributed to one Vorotnikov, a self-taught craftsman from Tiumen,²⁶ and there are indeed resemblances to western Siberian church architecture (both Tiumen and Tobolsk) of the same period, particularly in the placement of small, ornate baroque cupolas at the corners of the main structure. In other respects the design represents a variation on regional predecessors such as the Trinity Church at Trinity-Selenginsk Monastery (figure 15). The facades of both churches have cartouche-like ornaments that suggest Mongol or Buriat origins. At the same time it should be noted that cartouche ornaments, although of different configuration, can also be found on the facades of contemporary churches in the Russian north, particularly in Totma and Velikii Ustiug.²⁷

Ultimately, the Savior Cathedral would become the only substantial structure left from the original settlement of Selenginsk. In addition to the town's waning significance, the continued vulnerability to destructive flooding led government authorities to insist in 1840 on relocating the town to the opposite, left bank of the Selenga River. The original site, now uninhabited, eventually acquired the name Staroselenginsk (Old Selenginsk), while the new site, Novoselenginsk became a regional

administrative center. Only a small brick Chapel of the Holy Cross and a monument to V. V. Yakobii, the mid-eighteenth century *voevoda* of Selenginsk, stand near the Savior Cathedral. Nothing remains of the wooden churches and houses of Staroselenginsk.

Located on the left bank of the Selenga River midway between Verkhneudinsk and Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta, Novoselenginsk is referred to by Kennan simply as "Selenginsk." (He would have had no reason to know of the earlier settlement.) Although Kennan makes no mention of it, a substantial brick church was under construction in the town at the time of his visit. Dedicated to the Ascension, the church—or cathedral (*sobor*)—was designed in an austere Russo-Byzantine style with classicizing elements (figure 16). Work on the structure, which replaced a log church of the same dedication, began in the early 1880s under the supervision of Filipp Nevolin, a builder from Troitskosavsk. Many of the construction details were entrusted to local Buriat masters. The main altar was dedicated in 1888, and two additional altars were consecrated in 1895, at which point the building was completed.²⁸ Despite the church's standardized Russo-Byzantine design, used widely throughout the Russian provinces, the compact vertical form of the structure, with its central facade arches and white stuccoed brick walls, creates a clearly visible dominant on the dry plains surrounding Novoselenginsk.

The town possesses another religious monument, in the literal sense of the word: an obelisk that commemorates the work of the London Missionary Society in this region from 1820 to 1840. Led by Edward Stallybrass (ca. 1793-1884) and William Swan (1791-1866), the small group not only engaged, with little success, in Protestant missionary activity among the Buriats, but also published a Mongolian grammar and dictionary by Robert Yuille. Opposition from the Russian Orthodox Church led the



(16) ASCENSION CATHEDRAL, SOUTHWEST VIEW.

Russian authorities to expel the group in 1840, and they returned to London the following year.²⁹

Paradoxically, the remote location of Novoselenginsk, on the fringe of the Russian Empire, led to the creation of an unusual and substantial manor house, built for Dmitrii Startsev around 1850. The design of the house (figure 17) has been attributed to the nobleman Nikolai Bestuzhev, exiled for his implication in the Decembrist revolt of 1825.³⁰ In general form the structure resembles the wooden neoclassical estate houses that both men would have remembered from the central Russian provinces. The compact two-story house, which now serves as a museum devoted to the Decembrists and to local history, has an Ionic portico, also of two stories, with a balustrade on each level. Although the basic structure is of logs (as usual in Russia), the entire surface of the house's plank siding displays painted rustication to suggest the appearance of masonry construction—a device applied in Russia since the time of Peter the Great. As an echo of the faded glory of Russia's nobility, the Startsev house is one of Siberia's distinctive monuments.



(17) D. D. STARTSEV HOUSE

Gusinoe Ozero

Kennan, however, had little time for a stroll through Novoselenginsk. He was now approaching a far more important objective, the Buddhist monastery at Gusinoe Ozero. At the outset of this segment of his journey, Kennan had expressed an interest in the Buriat form of Buddhism, and he would devote several pages of his book to what he calls the Selenginsk lamasery (see appendices C, D).

If certain eighteenth-century churches in the Irkutsk region contained motifs of Buddhist origin, the territory to the southeast of Lake Baikal would provide during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries equally intriguing examples of Buddhist religious structures whose design is based on co-existing and complementary architectural systems, Russian and Tibetan-influenced Buriat.³¹ Unfortunately, many of the area's best examples of Buddhist architecture were destroyed during the Soviet period (especially in the 1930s), and those that remain are in need of major restoration work. Yet they still provide a clear view of the typology of local Buddhist architecture.

As Tibetan Buddhism—previously referred to as Lamaism—spread during the eighteenth century among

the Buriat population in the Transbaikal area, examples of the Buddhist monastery (*datsan*, from the Tibetan “court of meetings”) also began to appear in the area, presumably as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. With the development of the monastic system for education and meditation, the *datsan* gradually replaced the prayer yurts that had served as devotional sites for the Buriat population. By the middle of the nineteenth century, thirty-four Buddhist monasteries existed among the various Buriat clans in the Transbaikal area. Within these compounds, Buddhist art and sacred ritual were joined with Russian building patterns in creating the primary architecture of the Buriat *datsan*.³²

The influence of Buddhism in its local interpretation extended throughout the process of constructing the *datsan*. As defined by a contemporary Buriat historian:

Buriat religious art is organically tied with the developed world view at the base of Buddhist culture in Central and Eastern Asia. Buriat Buddhism took into itself the cult of spirits—the guardians of place, the cults of trees, of waters, etc. For example, the placement of monasteries within the landscape and the selection of a place for construction were linked to the burial rites of Buriats, with the cult of ancestors, of the earth, of trees, of mountains. ... These distinctive beliefs and conceptions had an impact on the orientation, form, and structure of religious buildings.³³

Astrologers and lamas were consulted at the earliest stages of the *datsan*, where construction “began with the selection of a site that answered all the necessary positive attributes and signs acceptable both to Buddhist deities and to local spirits of the earth, the water, and plant life.”³⁴

The Tibetan Buddhist practice of geomancy led to the search for sites where the energy of the earth, the balance of male (sky) and female (earth) elements, reached an optimal level.³⁵ In 1923 A. P. Barannikov noted:

the *datsan* is placed primarily in hollows protected from the winds, and near a river or lake. [...] Usually near the *datsan* there are more or less high summits, on which are arranged an *obo*, or places for the veneration of mountain spirits. When seen from one of these hills, the *datsan* usually represents a settlement of very strict plan: the regular intersecting streets go from east to west and north to south, so that the territory of the *datsan* presents an oval of slightly irregular form [...]. The main temple—the *tsokshin datsan*—is situated in the middle of the oval, and near it [...] a few other temples. [...] Finally, along the sides of the temples and primarily to the east and west, there are the yurts—the dwellings of the monks.³⁶

In addition to the main temple and secondary temples (*ilkhakan*) dedicated to specific deities, other structures within a large *datsan* might include: a temple or temples for instruction in sacred texts and the healing arts; stupas (*suburgan*) for the preservation of sacred relics; and structures dedicated to preparations for major holidays. Other service buildings, as well as small houses for the lamas, were typically located beyond the immediate confines of the *datsan*.³⁷ With the recognition in 1853 of Lamaism as an official religion within the Russian Empire, the accumulation of wealth and valuable objects within the monasteries increased, as did the number of structures.³⁸

The focal point of the *datsan* was the main temple, the construction of which was itself seen as a sacred act related to geomancy and a reverence for nature. In certain cases the period of prayer and sacrifice in preparation for construction might last fifteen days:

At the day designated by the astrologers for the start of the building, all of the material was on site. In the early morning, worship began. Bringing sacrifices, the lamas consecrated the place of the future temple. The content of the prayers involved requests to the deities for the protection of the newly erected temple and for the expulsion of any unclean spirits that ruled over the site. In the rites of sacrifice to the master spirits of the place, there was a section of repentance for sins against the spirits of stone, of wood, and earth, that is for the loss inflicted upon them during the cutting down of trees, the excavation of stones, etc.³⁹

The form of the main temple (*tsokchen dugan*) as developed in the Buriat *datsan* has been compared to early Indian temples whose design followed a centralized plan representing the sacred mandala.⁴⁰ Buriat temples, however, developed local, distinctive traits—such as the cuboid main structure, with superimposed ascending levels—that can be related to Mongol temple architecture, as well as to Orthodox church architecture. The link to Orthodox architecture applies particularly to masonry temples, the earliest of which were completed in 1808 and 1816, at the Aninskii and Aginskii *datsans* respectively.⁴¹ Despite the destruction during the twentieth century of some of the most significant examples in the evolution of Buriat temple architecture, the few remaining monuments provide evidence of the basic forms.

Perhaps the most important of these surviving ensembles is the Gusinoozersk *datsan* (also known among Buriats as the Tamchinskii *datsan*), which in 1809 became the center of Buddhism in eastern Siberia, a position that it held until 1930.⁴² The origins of the Gusinoozersk *datsan*—situated some twenty-five kilometers to the west of Staroselenginsk—are undoubtedly related to its



(18) MAIN TEMPLE, GUSINOOZERSKII (TAMCHINSKII) DATSAN.

location near the shores of Gusinoe Ozero (Goose Lake), a body of water whose blue color is all the more vivid in contrast to its arid setting within a large basin formed by hills to the south of Ulan Ude.⁴³

The first, wooden temple at the Gusinozersk *datsan* appeared in 1750; and although smaller than the slightly later temple at Tsongol *datsan*, it is considered to have been the earliest stationary temple among the Buriats.⁴⁴ With the realignment of influence in favor of the Gusinozersk *datsan*, the rebuilding and expansion of the main temple was only a matter of time. The first expansion occurred shortly after 1809, when an enlarged wooden temple with several spires was constructed.⁴⁵

Almost fifty years later, in 1858, work began on a new main temple befitting the status of this primary *datsan* in eastern Siberia. In a pattern increasingly typical for large Buddhist temples in this area, the main floor was of brick, with two upper stories in wood (figure 18). The primary entrance, on the south facade, is defined by a portico with six large masonry columns, in contrast to the usual practice of Buriat and Mongolian temple architecture, where the columns of the portico are of wood.⁴⁶ A contemporary account identified the construction supervisor as a Russian (Voronin) from

Novoselenginsk, but noted that the builders were Buriats, who since the eighteenth century had rapidly assimilated the building crafts imported by the Russians.⁴⁷

The year 1870 is usually given as the date of the temple's completion, although work on the richly decorated, colorful interior continued until the end of the century. Kennan was fascinated by this temple (figure B), as well as by the service that he witnessed (appendices C, D). The main feature of the interior was an altar with a large gilded bronze statue of the Buddha symbolizing Mount Sumeru, the central locus of Buddhist cosmology.⁴⁸ As Liudvig Minert has noted:

Lamaist temples in Mongolia and Buriatiia always placed their main part toward the north, the contemporary location, according to Buddhist teaching, of the Shigemuni-Buddha. The middle part of the north wall is given to space for the main *burkhans* [deities]—sculptural representations of Buddhas, Boddhisattvas, and Dharmapalas.”⁴⁹

Unfortunately, the persecution of Buddhism during the Soviet period and the closing of the Gusinozersk *datsan* in 1938 led to the almost total loss of the interior of the main temple.

Only the exterior of the *tsokchen dugan* still provides a view of its intricate symbolism, reflected in the ascent of receding levels suggestive of the stupa form (figure 19). The first level, with its decorated portico (figure 20) contained the primary space for worship, while the upper levels defined a more remote sanctum closed to lay worshippers. The second level contained ritual texts and vessels, and the third—the most holy, known as the *gonkan*—was dedicated to the temple's guardian spirit, or Dharmapala.⁵⁰ The upper levels were surrounded by galleries that supported curved, decorated roofs and accommodated ritual processions. On exterior as well as interior, the choice of color reflected the complex interpretations of the mandala.

Among the few surviving secondary temples at the Gusinoozersk *datsan*, the one designated as Dugan Choira served as a school for the study of Buddhist philosophy. This was the primary area of instruction within Buriat monasteries, which were of the *Shaddha* type.⁵¹ As the educational center of the monastery, the Dugan Choira (figure 21) was second in size to the adjacent main temple, the *tsokchen dugan*. The *Dugan Choira* consisted of a brick main story, containing a single hall large enough to accommodate the monastery's students, and a wooden second story dedicated to the guardian spirit.

Although seemingly simple in design and architectural ornamentation, the *Dugan Choira* embodies an integrated system of structural logic, subtle proportions, and the symbolic use of polychrome decoration. In the words of one specialist:

All the architecture of the building is polychromatic. The predominant colors are white for the masonry walls and dark red in the painting of the wooden siding of the second story and the wooden frieze of the first. The painting of details uses bright-red, green, blue, yellow, and their shades. Frequently elements of the same type in a horizontal row have a specific alternation of different colors.⁵²

On the interior of the temple the polychromatic emphasis continued in the requisite iconic images of the Buddha in painting and sculpture along the north wall.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Gusinoozersk *datsan* contained at least eighteen temples, of which only a handful have survived. (One of the small temples, the Devadzhiin, has been rebuilt for display near Ulan-Ude.) Perhaps the most revered of the lost temples was that dedicated to the Boddhisattva Maidara (Maitreya), built in the late nineteenth century and decorated in brilliant red, symbolizing the color of life.⁵²

Most of the temples actually served as small shrines, built of logs and brightly painted (figures 22, 23). This dense ensemble of sacred structures provided the setting for elaborate ritual processions (figure C) that Kennan aptly described. The gradual restoration of the remaining Gusinoozersk *datsan* temples and shrines offers hope for the return of the major historic center of Buddhism in the Buriat Republic.

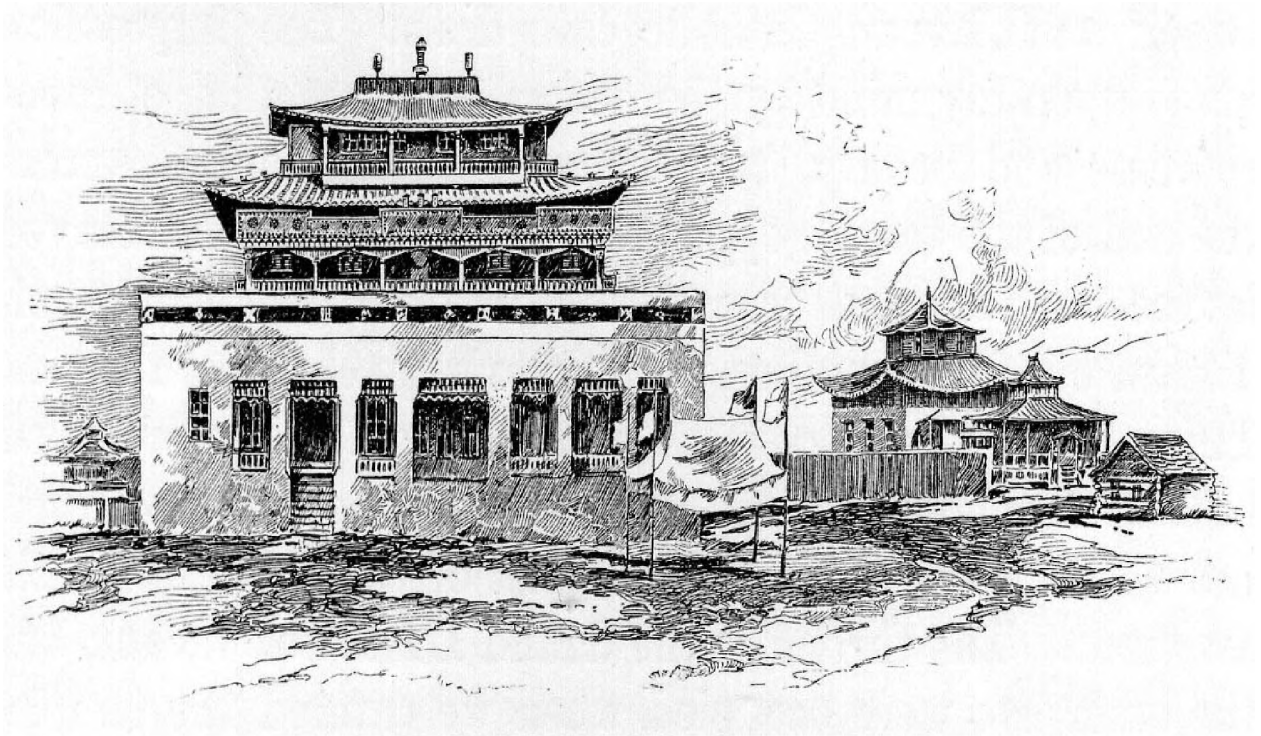
Kiakhta

After the visit to Gusinoo Ozero, Kennan and Frost returned to Selenginsk (appendix E). Their ultimate goal was the southernmost point in the "diversion," the linked towns of Troitskosavsk and Kiakhtinskaia Sloboda, located on the Kiakhta River and officially designated since 1934 by the single name of Kiakhta. Kennan's desire to see these settlements, and the companion Chinese town of Maimachen, formed one of the main reasons for the substantial detour in his project (appendix F).

The primary impetus for the founding and development of Troitskosavsk and Kiakhtinskaia Sloboda (Kiakhta Quarter) occurred in August 1727, when Count Savva Vladislavich-Raguzinskii concluded the Burinskii Treaty establishing a border between China and Russia.⁵⁴ A further treaty regulating trade was signed in October of the same year. Yet even before the signing of the treaties, work had begun in June 1727 on the New Trinity Fort, which included the eponymous Church of the Trinity, with altars to the Trinity and to Saint Savva of Serbia.⁵⁵ (Raguzinskii was of Serbian origins, and the second altar honored his patron saint.) In 1805, when the area around the fort was granted the official status of town, these two altars provided the name of Troitskosavsk (Trinity-Savva).

Concurrently with the building of the New Trinity fort, an adjacent trading district was established with the name Kiakhtinskaia Sloboda, located near a corresponding Chinese trading point known as Maimachen—a generic designation meaning "trading center." By the 1760s this Kiakhta Quarter had become the primary border point for trade with China, and the population and prosperity of both settlements increased accordingly. Of particular importance was the revoking in 1762 of the state monopoly of the fur trade, an act that greatly increased the number of merchants engaged in private commerce. At the same time the state continued to regulate certain aspects of the China trade, and Kiakhta benefitted from this as well. In the words of one specialist: "By 1772 Kiakhta had become the sole point for conducting legal Russo-Chinese trade."⁵⁶ During the eighteenth century the structures of both settlements were built of logs.

The increasing significance of Troitskosavsk at the



(B) THE LAMASERY.
(19) TSOGCHEN DUGAN (MAIN TEMPLE), GUSINOOZERSKII (TAMCHINSKII) DATSAN.



(20) PORCH, TSOGCHEN DUGAN (MAIN TEMPLE), GUSINOOZERSKII (TAMCHINSKII) DATSAN.
(21) TEMPLE CHOIRA, GUSINOOZERSKII (TAMCHINSKII) DATSAN.



(22-23) WOODEN TEMPLE, GUSINOOZERSKII (TAMCHINSKII) DATSAN.

beginning of the nineteenth century led to a decision to rebuild the Trinity Cathedral in brick. With donations from local merchants, work began on the cathedral in 1812, and in 1817 the structure was dedicated with three altars: the Trinity, the Nativity of the Virgin, and Saints Peter and Paul.⁵⁷ In its basic plan the Trinity Cathedral conformed to the usual linear design, from apse to main structure to bell tower in the west (figure 24). The main structure of the cathedral did not, however, have the lower level dedicated as a “warm” church, for use in the winter. Instead, the one-story refectory was substantially widened to include the two secondary altars (on the north and south sides), each of which stood in a heated space. In 1870 the refectory was expanded with the addition of a second story, which rivaled the height of the main sanctuary and contained two additional altars, dedicated to Saint Innokentii of Irkutsk and the Icon of the Virgin “Surety of Sinners.”⁵⁸

In its expanded form the Trinity Cathedral created an impression of unusual size, with two competing volumes: the main church, culminating in a large drum and dome, and the refectory, marked by neoclassical pediments (figure 25). The spacing and proportions of the arched windows along the entire length of the church further enhanced a perception of the building’s scale. At the western end the large bell tower, which had two altars of its own, repeated the arched window motif in the openings for the bells. The bell tower spire provided a vertical counterpoint to the horizontal massing of volume of the main cathedral structure.

Closed after the revolution and converted to a museum in 1934, the Trinity Cathedral stood in its original form until a fire in 1963 gutted the interior. Since then the walls have stood as a monumental, and still impressive, ruin, whose large windows show through to the sky. This effect is unusual in Russian church ruins, which typically had roof vaults of brick or other masonry forms, which often remained even after an intense fire destroyed the interior. The Trinity Cathedral, however, had a roof structure of large wooden beams, which were destroyed, along with the entire roof and dome, during the 1963 fire.

If the Trinity Cathedral represents a simple, if idiosyncratic, interpretation of neoclassicism, the Church of the Resurrection displays a more mature, late neoclassicism in which all of the components are carefully integrated into a single whole (figure 26). Begun in June of 1830 to replace a log church of the same name in the Kiakhta trading quarter, the Resurrection Church was supported by donations of local merchants and built to a design by the Moscow architect Grigorii Gerasimov.⁵⁹ With the completion of the church and the dedication of its three altars in 1838, Troitskosavsk could claim two of the most impressive churches in the Transbaikal region, a tribute to the town’s commercial significance as one of the main shipping centers for the China tea trade (figure D).

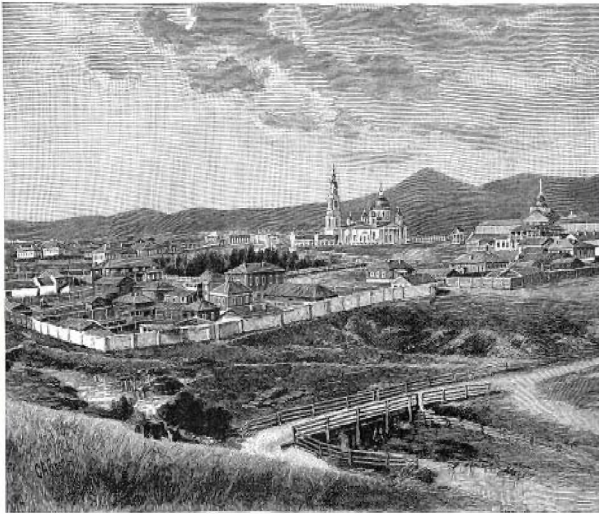
In its plan the Resurrection Church represents a complex, almost baroque, synthesis of volumes within the rigorous frame of late neoclassicism. On the exterior,



(C) SACRED WHITE ELEPHANT AND SHRINE OF THE BURKHANS.



(24) TRINITY CATHEDRAL, SOUTHEAST VIEW.
(25) TRINITY CATHEDRAL, SOUTH VIEW .



(D) A GENERAL VIEW OF KIAKHTA, SHOWING THE
“NEUTRAL GROUND.”

(26) CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION, SOUTHWEST VIEW.

the main structure is defined by Doric porticos on the south, east, and north facades (figure 27). The portico pediments provide a visual transition to the massive central drum—marked by arched windows and attached columns—and dome, which is in turn surmounted by a lantern, orb, and cross. The dome is also marked by lucarne windows at the points of the compass. The corner bays of the main structure extend upward in square towers that support subsidiary domes and crosses. All of these elements are carefully calculated, both among themselves and in relation to the bell tower attached at the west end of the vestibule. And although the overall effect does not equal the work of the greatest Russian masters of neoclassicism, the exterior unquestionably shows the hand of a skilled master of the Moscow school.

The interior bears some resemblance to the traditional Russian cross-inscribed plan, with four large piers supporting the main drum. But beyond the piers, the elongated side bays suggest the alcove spaces of elegant town houses in Moscow. A similar elongated plan applies to the winter (heated) chapels placed on the north and south sides of the wide vestibule and dedicated to the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God and to Saint Nicholas, respectively. In this case the semicircular niches in the east contained the chapel altars, a functional resolution, which also worked to conserve the heat from the ceramic stoves during the winter.⁶⁰ This complex combination of curved baroque space with neoclassical detail suggests a level of refinement that proclaimed the wealth of Troitskosavsk.

Further evidence of the town's prosperity and importance was displayed a decade later when Archbishop Nil of Irkutsk approved the construction of a magnificent iconostasis to be placed before the main altar of the Resurrection Church. Designed by the Irkutsk architect A. E. Razgildeev, with icons by the artist E. Reikhel, the structure of the icon screen consisted of bronze and crystal, with Royal Doors (in the center of the screen) plated with silver.⁶¹ One can only regret that so much of the interior of this important monument was lost, both from the savagery of the civil war in this area and during the Soviet era.

The final component of the ensemble of masonry churches in Troitskosavsk was the Cemetery Church of the Dormition, constructed in 1884–88 to replace an adjacent log church, which continued to stand until its destruction in 1942. Indeed, the wooden Church of the Dormition, rebuilt in 1836 to replace a still earlier church, was an excellent example of wooden Empire-style neoclassical architecture. Painted dark red with white trim, the compact, single-domed church with porticos and bell tower followed a pattern of refined late eighteenth-century churches in Moscow.⁶²

The subsequent masonry Church of the Dormition



(27) CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION, SOUTHEAST VIEW

(figure 28), built with the support of the local merchant Ya. A. Nemchinov, also has neoclassical elements such as the porticoes that define the facades, but the basic design corresponds to an eclectic, Russo-Byzantine style widely applied to church architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶³

For much of the nineteenth century Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta remained the dominant town in the southern part of Dauria, and its steady, if modest, growth was reflected in the expanding town plans of 1797, the 1820s, and 1859. In 1829 their combined population—4,380—made the two settlements for a brief period the largest Russian community in the entire Transbaikal region. In 1862 the population reached 5,430.⁶⁴ Soon thereafter other towns beyond Lake Baikal rapidly outstripped Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Chinese tea bound for Russia and eastern Europe increasingly went by sea to the port of Odessa rather than over the arduous land route through Kiakhta.⁶⁵ Even the building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which reached Verkhneudinsk in 1899, did little for the commerce of distant Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta, which to this day remains without a rail link.

Despite its economic decline, the former commercial significance of Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta is evident in the imposing dimensions of its Merchants Court (*Gostinyi dvor*), located near the Resurrection Church in the Kiakhta Quarter. The first, wooden variant of the Merchants Court, begun in 1728, was one of the earliest structures in the Kiakhta Quarter, and it was soon replaced by a

larger version. Plans for an expanded brick compound were discussed at the end of the eighteenth century but produced no results. The proposal was revived in 1828 by Aleksandr Lavinskii, who served in Irkutsk from 1822 to 1833 as the first Governor-General of Eastern Siberia. Yet even his support led to no specific action until the idea was supported in 1834 by Yegor Kankrin, the Minister of Finances in Saint Petersburg.⁶⁶ Work began in 1837 under the supervision of A. A. Medvedev, a military engineer, and construction of the complex was completed in 1842.

The general design of the Kiakhta Merchants Court consisted of an enclosed double square, whose exterior was marked by arcades, as well as porticos in the middle of each facade (figure 29). Despite changes in function and modification of design in the many decades since its completion, the *Gostinyi Dvor* has retained some of its main components (figure 30), which serve as reminders of its size and importance as one of the main points in the Russian tea trade; moreover, it reminds us of the adaptability of an austere form of neoclassicism for commercial structures throughout the Russian empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The area's other major commercial complex was the Trading Rows (also known as *Gostinyi Dvor*), located in the center of Troitskosavsk. In 1825 discussions began on the need to replace the late eighteenth-century wooden Merchants Court, on the edge of town, with a new brick complex, but little came of the idea until a fire in 1843 destroyed much of the trading district. Construction



(28) CEMETERY CHURCH OF THE DORMITION, SOUTHEAST VIEW.
(29) MERCHANTS COURT (GOSTINYI DVOR) & CUSTOMS HOUSE.
(30) MERCHANTS COURT (GOSTINYI DVOR) & CUSTOMS HOUSE

on the new complex began in 1847, and in 1853 it was completed (figure 31).⁶⁷ The Troitskosavsk Merchants Court was considerably smaller than the Gostinyi Dvor in the neighboring Kiakhta Quarter, which served as the main conduit for international (primarily Chinese) goods. Troitskosavsk, by contrast, was legally limited to internal trade, for which there was only limited demand in this sparsely populated region. The main structure, rectangular in form, consisted of trading stalls in two rows, back to back under a single roof. Each row looked toward an arcade that extended the length of the north and south facades. The simple neoclassical detailing imparted the appearance of regulated trade, as it did in so many other provincial Russian towns.

The quiet merchant prosperity of Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta at the turn of the twentieth century is perhaps best expressed in its wooden houses, many of which still stand. Most of these dwellings are built entirely of logs, usually covered with milled siding (figure 32), while others have a brick ground floor with a log upper story (figure 33). Despite their modest size, the houses typically have sturdy carved window frames projecting from the log facade (figure 34). In this wooden environment, the occasional masonry house is all the more visible.

The most notable exception to this wooden ambience is the A. M. Lushnikov house (figure 35), begun in the middle of the nineteenth century as a single-story brick dwelling in the Kiakhta Quarter. Lushnikov, a cultured and generous host, was frequently visited by the local intellectual elite, including exiled Decembrists such as the brothers Nikolai and Mikhail Bestuzhev, as well as the noted explorer Nicholas Przhevalsky.⁶⁸ (As a major point of entry to Mongolia and China, Kiakhta attracted a number of specialists in Asian studies.) In the 1870s the house was expanded with the addition of a second floor, also of brick, to which were added wooden service wings (figure 36). It was this renovated house that George Kennan visited in 1885. The extensive, lively account of his visit with Lushnikov is one of the high points of the book (appendix F, second part).

The last major architectural project in Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta before the revolution was a large complex of brick buildings known as the Red Barracks, completed in 1910 at a time when the government of Nicholas II was actively expanding its military presence along the southeastern border of the empire. Consisting of over twenty large structures, including officers' housing, a church, and power plant, the Red Barracks at Troitskosavsk adhered to a functional brick style typical of factory design.⁶⁹

The barracks gained grim renown during the Russian Civil War, which unfolded with particular savagery in the Far East. As revolutionary forces pushed White armies out of western and central Siberia in 1919, prisoners with

suspected leftist sympathies from various Siberian towns were transferred to the barracks, then under the control of the Cossack ataman Grigorii Semenov, who for two years ruled the Transbaikalia area from Chita with support from the Japanese. The growing threat of a revolutionary offensive at the end of 1919 led Semenov, who displayed psychopathic harshness during his months in power, to order the execution of the prisoners, and on January 1, 1920, several hundred (perhaps as many as 1,600) were slaughtered at the edge of the barracks compound.⁷⁰

The retreat of Semenov's forces toward the Far East in 1920 did not mean the end of atrocities in the Transbaikalia area. In the spring of 1920 forces commanded by Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg occupied much of Mongolia and posed a threat to border areas, including Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta. Indeed, these forces seized the nearby Chinese settlement of Maimachen, located across the border in Mongolia. However, the appearance of Soviet and Comintern support for the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party undermined the base of von Ungern-Sternberg's forces and led to an attack on the Maimachen garrison in March 1921. During the fighting a fire completely destroyed this once thriving Chinese settlement, which so fascinated George Kennan (appendix G). In view of fundamentally changed political and economic conditions, no attempt was made to rebuild the Chinese settlement.⁷¹ All the more valuable, then, are the sketches that George Frost made, both of the lanes of Maimachen and of its inhabitants (figure E).

Nerchinsk (Albazin prelude)

Departing Kiakhta on October 15, Kennan, much weakened after a bout of illness, and Frost made their way yet again to Selenginsk ("this wretched little Buriat village"), where they were to meet certain political exile (appendix H). After a day of meetings, they continued their arduous journey eastward, first stopping in Verkhneudinsk, where Kennan wished to make a brief inspection of two prisons (appendix I). On October 19 they left Verkhneudinsk for another segment of exhausting travel in increasingly wintry weather (map B). Even in his weakened state, Kennan was absorbed by the dramatic appearance of the hilly landscape (appendix J). Their immediate destination was some 300 miles to the east: the town of Chita, administrative center of the Transbaikalia territory. Although Chita was not a primary part of Kennan's narrative, Kennan and Frost passed through the town twice and recorded brief but informative impressions.⁷² The history and architecture of Chita will be described at the end of this text—on the return, as it were.

The ultimate goal of this part of their journey was Nerchinsk, an area associated with infamous silver mines that used convict labor in especially harsh and dangerous



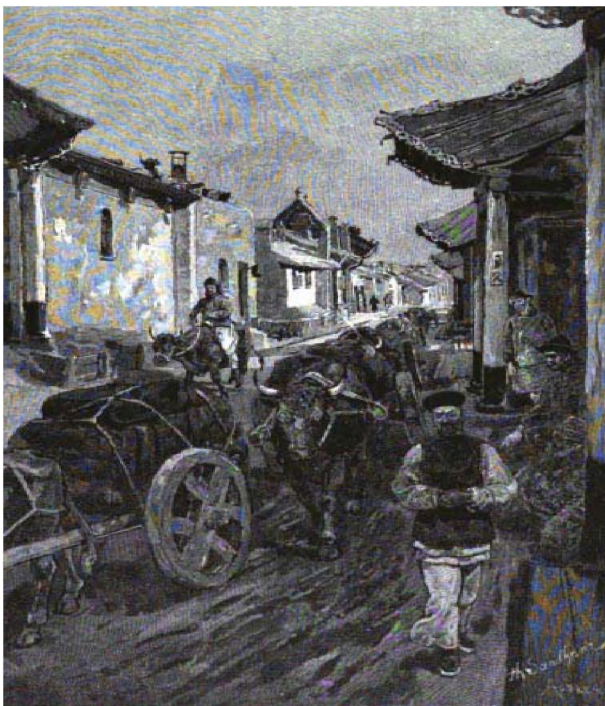
(31) MERCHANT ROWS (GOSTINYIE RIADY).
(32) WOODEN HOUSE, SEROV STREET 6.



(33) MASONRY/WOODEN HOUSE, KRUPSKAIA STREET.
(34) FORMER RUSSO-ASIATIC BANK, LENIN STREET 21 (?).



(35-36) LUSHNIKOV HOUSE, TRANSPORTNAIA STREET 15.



(E) STREET IN MAIMACHIN.

conditions. (Some of the Decembrists had served the initial punitive phase of their exile at the Nerchinsk mines.) At this point Kennan's narrative returns to the book's main purpose, an investigation of the Siberian exile system.

It must be emphasized, however, that the town of Nerchinsk and the Nerchinsk mines are two different locations separated by a considerable distance. Kennan and Frost proceeded first to the mines (grouped around a settlement known as Nerchinskii Zavod), to which he devotes much horrified attention—only subsequently did Kennan and Frost make their way to the town of Nerchinsk, where they stopped on the way back to Chita (map C).

Kennan's description of Nerchinsk resembles the "travelogue" of the preceding passages, with astute and sometimes amusing descriptions of the settlement and its inhabitants. Arriving in Nerchinsk at the end of November 1885, the utterly fatigued Kennan immediately had a tempestuous encounter with the owner of what was generously referred to as a "hotel" (appendix K). In defense of the proprietor, one must ask what other accommodations would be expected at that time and place, and under those circumstances. Overcoming their initial disappointment, Kennan and Frost set out to explore the town, which in earlier times had played such a significant role in Russia's Far Eastern presence.

The settlement of Nerchinsk arose as a result of Moscow's attempt to define its border with China in

the mid seventeenth century. To that end, the voevoda in Yeniseisk, Afanasii Pashkov, sent the explorer and Cossack leader Peter Beketov (ca. 1600-1661?) back to the Transbaikalian area in 1652. Pashkov had already been in the region in 1628 as part of a campaign to impose tribute on the Buriats. After establishing a fort at Lake Irgen (on the upper Khilok River) and crossing the Yablonovyi Range in late fall of 1653, Beketov made a winter camp (*zimov'e*) on the Ingoda River near its confluence with the Chita. A permanent settlement on the site did not appear until 1675, and the subsequent town of Chita did not acquire major significance until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Power in the area lay farther east, and Beketov's mission was to make contact with leaders of indigenous peoples. Before returning to the Irgen ostrog, he sent a small detachment under Maksim Urazov to establish a fort known as Neliudskii, on the Shilka River near its confluence with the Nerch.⁷³ This they succeeded in doing with some difficulty at the beginning of 1654. Lack of provisions, however, led to the threat of starvation, which was intensified by attacks from Buriats. After truce with the Buriats in the spring of 1655, the Urazov detachment left the Shilka fort. And in 1656 the small fort was burned by a group of Tungus under the authority of the Evenk prince Gantimur. The immediate cause of this hostility has been attributed to raids on Gantimur's subjects by a group of fugitive Cossacks led by one Filka Poletai.⁷⁴

The larger cause of native enmity toward Russians, however, appears to have been the reckless and extreme brutality inflicted upon aboriginal peoples by Yerofei Khabarov, another of Russia's legendary seventeenth-century explorers and Cossack leaders.⁷⁵ Although Khabarov is celebrated in the popular imagination as a national hero, his treatment of local tribes during the epic Amur River expedition of 1649-53 was not only inhuman but violated Moscow's deliberate policy of conciliation toward the peoples of Siberia, a policy vital to the progress of Russian settlement and exploitation of the region. Indeed, Khabarov was stripped of his command by the tsar's emissary, Dmitrii Zinoviev, in August 1653, but the resentment—and attacks—continued for several more years.

The goal of a fortified settlement on the Shilka would not be deterred by the initial reverses. By command of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in June 1654, Afanasii Pashkov was designated the new voevoda of Dauria, and by the beginning of the next year, the specific tasks of his command were defined by the Siberian Office (*sibirskii prikaz*). In the spring of 1656 Pashkov departed Yeniseisk on the arduous journey of over 2,000 kilometers, much of it by raft, to the Shilka River.⁷⁶ Pashkov's accompanying group numbered some 420



(37) SAVIOR TOWER, ILIMSK FORT.

(mostly *sluzhilye liudi*) and included as its priest the Old Believer dissenter archpriest Avvakum, with his family. (This remarkable choice shows that the Muscovite court, having sent Avvakum into harsh exile for his unrelenting opposition to Patriarch Nikon's ecclesiastical policies, still felt considerable sympathy for his person.) In his *Zhitie* (Vita) Avvakum gives a vivid and unflinching view of the rigors of the trip and the ruthless discipline imposed by Pashkov.⁷⁷

The passage itself took three years, much of it by river against the current. In the summer and fall of 1656, the group moved from Yeniseisk to the Bratsk fort, which provided shelter for the winter (figure 37). In the spring of 1657 they continued in flatboats (*doshchenik*) up the Angara River to Lake Baikal, where Pashkov achieved the hazardous crossing by sail to the mouth of the Selenga River.⁷⁸ By the fall of 1657, the detachment had reached the now ruined Lake Irgen fort, which Pashkov repaired for the winter. With little respite, Pashkov undertook a winter crossing in early 1658 from Lake Irgen to the Ingoda River, where 170 rafts (plot) were prepared for the group and its supplies. The final passage occurred in the spring and early summer of 1658 down the Ingoda and Shilka Rivers.⁷⁹ Pashkov arrived at the mouth of the Nerch (and the ruins of Urazov's Neliudskii fort) in July 1658.

Because of the scarcity of forests along the middle reaches of the Shilka, the logs for a new fort had already been cut during winter preparations on the Ingoda. (This was a not infrequent tactic in Siberian fort construction: cut the logs in an upriver location and float them down for rapid assembly at the designated site, so as to minimize the window of vulnerability during construction.) The Shilka-Neliudskii fort was quickly rebuilt on an island at the mouth of the Nerch, some five kilometers from the site of the earlier (1653) fort.⁸⁰ The original walls were of sharpened, vertical logs, with four corner towers and an adjacent Church of the Resurrection. As early

as 1659 the fort was referred to as "Nerchinsk" in state correspondence, although the previous names continued to be used by Pashkov himself.⁸¹

In any event Pashkov's days as voevoda in Dauria were numbered, in large part due to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich's anger at reports of a severe beating of Avvakum at Pashkov's command in September 1656. Upon learning of this in 1658, the tsar promptly decided to remove Pashkov, yet practical considerations delayed implementation of the decision for almost four years. The dramatic and complex psychological confrontation between Avvakum and Pashkov unfolded over a period of almost ten years, concluding in 1664 with Avvakum's victory over the repentant Pashkov shortly before his death in Moscow.⁸² It is a gift of historical fate that Avvakum, one of the most distinctive writers in Russian letters and an exemplar of Russian religious dissent, should have been thrust into an expedition of such importance for maintaining the Russian presence in eastern Siberia. Although devoted primarily to the physical and spiritual trials inflicted on him and his family, Avvakum's account of the Pashkov expedition is an accurate and uniquely vivid description of the seventeenth-century passage to Siberia.

Avvakum was by no means the only member of the group to suffer the harsh discipline imposed by Pashkov. In his own report to the Siberian Office within a year of his arrival at the Nerch River, Pashkov noted that of the 300 enlisted men in the group, 58 had died, 6 escaped, and another 53 were ill.⁸³ By the time L. B. Tolbuzin arrived in 1662 to assume duties as voevoda (through 1667) only 75 remained on active duty at all three Dauria forts, including Irgensk; and by 1664 the number had dwindled to 46.⁸⁴ Hunger and the difficulties in provisioning new fortified settlements over enormous distances proved major obstacles for Russian strategic moves toward the Amur River during the latter half of the seventeenth century. In view of this strategy, Russian authorities were inevitably burdened with the need for armed detachments in a strategic area with no mutually recognized borders. As Aleksandr Artemev has written in regard to the Russian presence in Dauria:

The tense situation, connected with constant raids by Mongol Taish tribes in the 1660s-70s on Russian forts and on local tribute subjects of the Muscovite tsar, required the regular reinforcement of the Dauria fort garrisons with *sluzhilye liudi*. Despite orders from the Siberian Office concerning assistance to the Nerchinsk region (uezd), the Yakutsk and Ilim voevodas were incapable of responding because of their own dearth of people. And in the enormous Yeniseisk territory, the

voevoda for the same reasons annually sent only small parties of *sluzhilye liudi*.⁸⁵

With the limited success of attempts to reinforce the Dauria garrisons from Yeniseisk and other Siberian towns, Tolbuzin resorted to the unusual measure of accepting into the higher service category of *sluzhilye liudi* not only hunters and fishermen (*guliashchie* and *promyshlennye liudi*) but also non-Russian natives.⁸⁶

The many serious obstacles notwithstanding, there were also favorable developments for Moscow in Dauria. In 1667 the Evenk prince Gantimur, who had accepted Russian authority in 1655 and then turned against the Russians the following year, once again appeared at Nerchinsk with his extended family and servitors. Gantimur's rejection of the vassalage and protection of the recently established Manchu Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty led to an increase in tension along the Manchurian border. Not only did Gantimur control considerable territory near the Amur River, but his example was followed by other Evenk-Tungus leaders.⁸⁷ Despite this serious affront to their authority, Chinese attempts to reclaim the now aged Gantimur were repeatedly foiled in 1669-70 by the newly-appointed Nerchinsk *voevoda*, Danil Arshinskii, who also mollified Peking's resentment by suggesting that the "white tsar" wished to live in peace and friendship with Peking.⁸⁸ The Russian policy of diplomatic deference and discreet maneuvering in the Amur region continued after Arshinskii's departure in 1673 as the Nerchinsk *voevoda*.

Diplomatic fencing could not, however, resolve the inevitable collision of Chinese and Russian interests in Dauria. Having passed through Irkutsk and Nerchinsk in 1675, a major Muscovite embassy headed by Nikolai Spafarii reached Peking in 1676, but the ensuing negotiations failed to resolve the outstanding issues of territorial control and tribute levies. Although the Russian side refused to yield on the question of returning Gantimur, Peking was in a strong position to respond by blocking trade and by initiating military action, both of which eventually happened along the Amur River. Under the command of *voevodas* Petr Shulgin, Fedor Voeikov, and Ivan Vlasov (from 1684), Nerchinsk remained a forward command post for Russian responses to Chinese actions during the next decade. As the diplomatic situation reached an impasse, the Chinese campaign to expel the Russians from the Amur River basin focused on the Cossack fort of Albazin.

Albazin was an unusually dramatic example of Russia's violent "Wild East" during the seventeenth century. The first Russian mention of the settlement refers to events in 1650, when Yerofei Khabarov, having seized the lands of a Daurian prince Albazy, wintered in Albazin and then burned it upon leaving

in 1651.⁸⁹ Despite this inauspicious beginning, the settlement's strategic location at the northernmost course of the Manchurian Amur, near its confluence with the Amuerkhe River, eventually attracted other Russians. The first major group, consisting of 84 Cossacks and peasants from the Ilim area, arrived in 1666. Their leader, Nikifor Chernigovskii, was a Polish exile in Russian service (*sluzhilyi chelovek*) who the preceding year had formed the group in rebellion against the wantonly cruel behavior of the Ilim *voevoda*, Lavrentii Obukhov.

It should be noted that the quality of Muscovy's representatives in Siberia, and particularly in distant eastern Siberia, varied greatly, from resourceful, intelligent leaders such as Arshkinskii to corrupt and debauched tyrants. In some cases, such as that of Afanasii Pashkov, courage and resourcefulness were combined with a propensity for harsh punishment in an era when such means were generally considered the only way to enforce discipline under circumstances of extreme hardship. In the popular imagination the *voevodas* were answerable only to God and the Tsar, but "God is on high, and the Tsar is far away." To be sure, the Siberian Office exercised a system of control, especially through the Siberian "capital" of Tobolsk. But even when abuses were reported, redress frequently took two years, as couriers and investigators traversed a vast and difficult terrain.

In any event the anger against Obukhov's misdeeds, which included numerous rapes, reached such intensity that he was killed during the uprising. Aware of the unspeakably severe punishment for an attack on the tsar's representative, Chernigovskii's group undertook the long trek to the Amur borderlands beyond Moscow's control. Despite great distances, word of the Albazin area had obviously spread within the network of Russian settlements in Siberia. Artemev notes the unexpected denouement to this bold move:

Once there they built a fort on the Albazin site and took upon themselves the functions of collecting tribute from the local population. The Cossacks punctually sent the collected tribute through Nerchinsk to Moscow. Meanwhile the tsarist administration had sentenced in absentia Chernigovskii and seventeen of his comrades to execution. However, the latter achieved such success in the collection of tribute, that in 1672 they were amnestied by an edict of the Siberian authorities [in Tobolsk].⁹⁰

Ironically, the Cossacks' very success in gathering tribute (such as valuable fur pelts) led to an escalation of local attacks on Albazin, as well as a Manchurian protest against this incursion into their own tributary system, a protest that led Arshinskii in 1670 to issue a ban on further tribute collection by the Albazin Cossacks.

A different tactic in strengthening the Albazin fort was tried by Petr Shulgin (Arshinskii's successor as Nerchinsk *voevoda*), who in the mid 1670s sent small groups of exiled peasants to till the rich land surrounding the post. This measure, too, would have fateful consequences in the following decade. In the meantime, the Albazin settlement took root, with a log Church of the Resurrection inside the stockade and a log chapel dedicated to Saint Nicholas at the outer defensive lines.⁹¹ By the early 1680s the land produced grain sufficient not only for the needs of Albazin, but also for Nerchinsk. In a further irony this bounty—seemingly a godsend for the hard-pressed *voevoda* in Nerchinsk, Fedor Voeikov—set in motion events that the eastern Siberian authorities could not control. In the first place, word of the cornucopia began to attract settlers and fugitives from other parts of eastern Siberia, so many, according to Artemev, that the central Amur River valley soon had more Russian settlers than the vast Transbaikal territory.⁹² And if the numbers were still relatively small, the movement nonetheless served as a portent on both sides of the border.

Russian authorities vacillated between attempts, on the one hand, to stem the flow to the Amur region (particularly of runaway peasants and deserters) and, on the other, to take the greatest advantage from the new settlements. In 1683 Prince Konstantin Shcherbatov, the chief *voevoda* in Yeniseisk, coordinated a policy of reinforcing Russian settlements in Transbaikal and Dauria, including the regions (*uezd*) of Irkutsk, Ilim, Iakutsk, Nerchinsk, and Albazin.⁹³ Of these territories Albazin presented by far the greatest affront to Manchu authority, and demands were made for its evacuation. Thus the settlement became a flash point for Russian armed resistance to Chinese attempts to reassert their control over the Amur. After sharp fighting in June 1685 the Albazin commander, Aleksei Tolbuzin, was compelled to surrender the fort (which was then burned) and return to Nerchinsk, together with the few hundred surviving Cossacks and peasants.

Surprisingly, the Nerchinsk *voevoda*, Ivan Vlasov, not only permitted the peasants to return to the Albazin site in August to harvest the spring grain but also commanded the rapid rebuilding of the fort under the direction of Aleksei Tolbuzin. In proportions that indicate the primarily military purpose of this move, the contingent included 448 service men, 70 peasants, and 96 hunters and craftsmen.⁹⁴ Subsequent reinforcements brought the number of Russians to over 800 by late June 1686. This active response to a recent defeat and a Manchu ultimatum led to a final siege, formally lasting from the beginning of July until the end of November 1686. Despite the overwhelming superiority of forces on the Chinese side (including over 6,000 troops and a siege

tower with cannons manned by twenty Dutch Jesuits) and the death of Tolbuzin five days into the siege, the Russian garrison successfully resisted all attempts to storm the fort.

Moscow in the meantime had decided to make the best of an untenable situation and sent Fedor Golovin as a plenipotentiary to negotiate an end to the conflict. When this news reached Peking in late November, the Chinese attempted to end the siege, but the frozen Amur River blocked the movement of their own forces, which retreated a short distance from the fort. As a result both sides suffered substantial losses from hunger and cold. When the Chinese finally withdrew in the fall of 1687, only a few dozen soldiers remained under the command of Lieutenant Afanasii Beiton. Scores of the Russian dead remained in a log hut, unburied, for lack of a priest.⁹⁵

During the diplomatic maneuvering after the stalemate at Albazin, Moscow proposed that the Amur River serve as a boundary between the two states and China countered with a demand to surrender not only Albazin but Nerchinsk as well. With increasing pressure on the *de facto* Muscovite ruler, the regent Sophia, the failure of Russian campaigns in the Crimea in 1687 and 1689, led Moscow's emissary to accept a Chinese compromise. The Russians were compelled to surrender Albazin, and within days of the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk (August 29, 1689) the Russian garrison survivors razed the fort before the eyes of the Chinese and retreated to Nerchinsk.⁹⁶ Apart from archeological remnants, there are no visible traces of the early Albazin settlement.

Nerchinsk

Nerchinsk, however, survived as a Russian possession, and with its favorable location near the Shilka River the settlement became one of the most important centers for administration and trade with the Manchu empire.⁹⁷ The eighteenth-century town was built almost entirely of logs, although two masonry churches arose at the beginning of the century: the Cathedral of the Trinity (1720; not extant) and the Church of the Dormition at the Nerchinsk-Dormition Monastery, founded by order of Tsar Peter I in 1706 on the site of the original Cossack post created by Maksim Urasov in 1653. The monastery's first church was built of logs in 1710, and the brick Church of the Dormition followed soon thereafter, in 1712 (figure 38). Although the Church of the Miraculous Icon of the Savior in Irkutsk was completed slightly earlier, the Nerchinsk Dormition Church is nonetheless one of the oldest Russian masonry churches in Siberia, particularly in the Far East.⁹⁸ In view of the difficulties in marshalling material and technical support for masonry construction anywhere in Siberia, the presence of two brick churches in such a distant part of Russia is clearly the result of



(38) CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION, NERCHINSK DORMITION MONASTERY, SOUTHWEST VIEW.



(39-40) CATHEDRAL OF THE DORMITION, NERCHINSK DORMITION MONASTERY.

political priorities (defined by the tsar himself) in stating the Russian presence in this strategic area, near the border of the Qing empire.

There is no known documentary evidence about the builders of the Dormition Church, and its design—a simple cuboid structure with five cupolas, a vestibule, and a bell tower over the west entrance—seems more archaic than that of contemporary masonry churches in Siberia and the Urals, despite window pediments that show traces of Ural-Siberian motifs⁹⁹ (figure 39). At least one specialist has linked the Nerchinsk church to late seventeenth-century architecture of the Russian north, a reasonable assumption in view of the origins of many of Siberia's Russian builders and explorers in towns such as Velikii Ustiug.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the area along the northern Dvina River contains a number of examples, such as the Church of Saint Barbara (1693-1702) at Ukhtostrov, similar to the Dormition Church at Nerchinsk. The bell tower, in the traditional octagon-over-square form, is the most skillfully realized component, with its own cupola above a small drum (figure 40).

In 1812 Nerchinsk was relocated to ground north of the confluence of the Nercha and Shilka Rivers in order to escape periodic floods.¹⁰¹ From that time the use of masonry construction increased for both secular and religious structures. The dominant structure of the first half of the nineteenth century was the Cathedral

of the Resurrection, begun in 1814 and completed in 1841.¹⁰² The cathedral, never completed to its first plans, provided by Irkutsk, now exists in a much disfigured state, including the loss of its bell tower (figure 41). But even the cathedral's original design represented a curious reversal of the usual Russian Orthodox form, which places the sanctuary in the major structure at the east end. In this case, however, the sanctuary was contained within an octagonal component of two small stories, engulfed by side altar chapels of larger floor space. It is possible that the region's severe climate recommended this distribution of space to the lower side altars as a way of conserving heat while accommodating the number of worshippers expected in the town's main church during long winters.

During the nineteenth century Nerchinsk struggled to maintain a position as one of the main points for trade with the Orient.¹⁰³ This mercantile side of the town was visibly represented by its imposing Merchants' Court (*gostinyi dvor*), whose graceful neoclassical design possessed a sense of proportion lacking in the cathedral, which it faces on the same axis. The center of the Merchants' Court, completed in 1840, consists of a two-story building with an arcaded ground floor supporting a portico of six doric columns and a pediment (figure 42). The main structure is flanked on either side by low elongated extensions that were divided into



(41) CATHEDRAL OF THE RESURRECTION, EAST VIEW.
(42) GOSTINNY DVOR (MERCHANTS COURT).

a total of twenty stalls for commercial space.¹⁰⁴ These extensions originally had an arcade providing access to the trading stalls, and although the arcade has since been enclosed, its outlines are still visible on the facade. The main structure's evocation of a temple of commerce is a device that appeared in merchants' courts throughout the Russian provinces, yet the Nerchinsk example shows more care in overall design as well as detail, particularly when compared with the *Gostinyi dvor* in Kiakhta.

After the suppression of the Decembrist uprising in 1825, Nerchinsk, and the Nerchinsk silver mines, gained wide notoriety as the place of incarceration for a number of the exiled nobles.¹⁰⁵ This dubious distinction was not, however, without its benefits for the town, which, like Irkutsk, gained from the education and enlightened culture of the Decembrists, most of whom were gradually allowed to resettle in more favorable conditions.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, after the reforms of the reign of Alexander II, the economic development of Siberia accelerated, and Nerchinsk, well placed on the Shilka River, temporarily benefitted from these changes.

One of the most revealing examples of this economic growth in the Transbaikal area is represented by the merchant Mikhail Butin (1836-1907), co-founder of a family enterprise that in many ways reinvigorated Nerchinsk during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the mansion and attached commercial complex that he built transformed the appearance of the town's center, as clearly seen in Frost's sketch (figure F). A more detailed description of the ensemble will be provided below.

In his own substantial book on Siberia, Mikhail Butin wrote that he was descended from a prospector sent to the Nerchinsk area at the turn of eighteenth century by Peter I as part of an expedition in search of valuable ores.¹⁰⁷ By the beginning of the nineteenth century the great-grandsons of the first Siberian Butin had built a substantial local trade in furs, which they sold primarily at the fair in Nizhnii Novgorod. The family capital continued to be passed down to successive generations, yet restrictive inheritance laws limited access to that capital by younger progeny.¹⁰⁸

In response to their confining financial situation, the brothers Nikolai and Mikhail Butin moved to Kiakhta, where the former began transporting tea from Kiakhta to Nerchinsk for the merchant Nikolai Khrisanfovich Kandinskii (1810-63), great-uncle of the renowned modern artist Vasilii (Wassily) Vasilevich Kandinskii (1866-1944). Indeed, the extended Kandinskii family had arrived in Siberia even earlier than the Butins. Evidence indicates the presence of Kandinskiis (or Kondinskiis) in Tomsk during the seventeenth century. The artist's great-great-grandfather, Petr Alekseevich Kandinskii (1735-96), was exiled to Nerchinsk (apparently for church

theft in Yakutsk) after 1752. His son Khrisanf Petrovich Kandinskii (1774-1850s) continued the father's larcenous ways and was condemned to penal servitude in the Nerchinsk area.¹⁰⁹ Upon release in the early nineteenth century, however, Khrisanf became a model citizen and highly successful entrepreneur, who is known to have made substantial donations for the construction of two churches at the Kandinskii estate village of Biankino, on the Shilka downriver from Nerchinsk.¹¹⁰

One of Khrisanf Kandinskii's sons, Silvestr (1794-1869), had a son Vasilii (1832-1926), who was the father of the great artist. Vasilii Silvestrovich Kandinskii was himself well known as a tea merchant in Kiakhta-Troitskosavsk, whose wealth allowed him to travel widely. In 1862 he met the leading Russian political exile and thinker Alexander Herzen in London, and shortly thereafter he settled in Moscow, where the future genius of modern art was born in 1866. Another of Khrisanf Kandinskii's sons, Nikolai, was the tea trader for whom Nikolai Butin worked. Despite his move to Moscow in the 1850s, Khrisanf Kandinskii continued to be involved in the tea trade and in his Troitskosavsk stores, for which Nikolai Butin had become the managing director.¹¹¹

The preceding genealogical excursus is intended to provide an insight into the intricate web of entrepreneurial connections created by a few Siberian dynasties, a web that extended from the Russian Far East to the merchant elite of Moscow. The success of Nikolai Butin in the firm of Nikolai Kandinskii not only enabled Butin to provide employment in the Kandinskii stores for his younger brother Mikhail, but also gave the two brothers an inside advantage in buying the Troitskosavsk firm after the death of Nikolai Kandinskii in 1863. Following this purchase the Butin brothers moved the merchandise and equipment to Nerchinsk (at that time about 4,000 inhabitants), where in 1866 they opened a large emporium known as Butin Brothers Co. (*Torgovyi dom brat'ev Butinykh*).¹¹²

The operations of the Butin enterprise, unprecedented for this region in scale and quality, soon reached far beyond Nerchinsk. In the words of one Siberian historian: "Already by the end of the 1860s the Butins had concentrated in their hands a retail trade that stretched from the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the banks of the Enisei. . . ."¹¹³ But the Butins' ambitions were not limited to retail trade. For almost fifteen years following the establishment of the Butin firm, the pace of their acquisitions and investments mounted at a vertiginous rate: the technologically advanced Novo-Aleksandrovskii distillery near Irkutsk in 1871; the Nikolaevskii iron foundry near Bratsk in 1872; and another distillery and salt works in the 1870s. In order



(F) BUTIN'S HOUSE AT NERCHINSK.

to serve these far-flung enterprises the firm maintained a number of river boats.¹¹⁴

In the midst of this expansion Mikhail Butin also found time to equip and accompany serious expeditions such as the one to China in 1871.¹¹⁵ Although possessed of only a few grades of primary schooling, Mikhail Butin was a remarkable autodidact, and in the same year as his China trip he published a small book, *A Historical Sketch of Relations between the Russians and China*, with specific recommendations for the improvement of trade and transportation between Russia and China. He noted with concern the rapid expansion of trade between China and European powers, while Russia remained limited by the tea trade along an old and difficult trading route through Kiatkhta and central Mongolia to Peking. Butin recommended a more direct route from Nerchinsk through the tip of eastern Mongolia south to Peking and the port of Tientsin:

This route will increase our market in Mongolia and Manchuria, will decrease the cost of transport from China of Chinese and other countries' goods. Furthermore, it will serve as a means for the spread of Russian influence on the population of those localities with whom we will need to enter into close acquaintance, and all this will happen peacefully, in the name of civilization and progress.¹¹⁶

In reality Butin's views were ahead of his times, and Russian expansion in this area over the next three decades would prove fraught with difficult and dangerous complexities, particularly in view of growing Japanese designs in the area. Nonetheless, Butin's vision

of a new route bore some relation to the eventual path of the Russian-sponsored Chinese Eastern Railway in the 1890s.¹¹⁷

The Butin firm also held a major interest in the Darasun gold mines, as well as others acquired along the Amur River.¹¹⁸ The productivity of these works improved significantly as a result of technological measures introduced after Mikhail Butin's trip across the United States in 1872. Butin was profoundly impressed by what he saw in America, both in a positive sense and in contrast to the lagging economic development in Siberia. The importance of the American model for Butin is demonstrated by his publication of a small book on the trip soon after his return. Entitled *Letters from America*, the volume gave numerous examples of American initiative in opening trading routes and markets throughout the Pacific Basin, not excluding Russia's Far Eastern territories.

Although amicable in tone, *Letters from America* expresses the concern of a Siberian entrepreneur over the American advance at Russia's expense.¹¹⁹ Also in light of the American experience, Butin placed particular importance on the necessity of an active program of railroad construction:

Only the extension of the railway along the entire length of our Siberian territory can create the solid colonization of our interior provinces. Indeed, the more we remain uninvolved spectators of political and economic events taking place in the vicinity of our eastern fringes, the worse the situation of things will become for us.¹²⁰

Butin's was by no means the only contemporary voice raised in support of a trans-Siberian railroad, yet this vast undertaking did not formally begin until two decades later, in 1891.

Mikhail Butin was generous with his wealth, which directly supported a number of institutions in Nerchinsk. Among the most prominent were: a telegraph station in 1867, a public library and the Saint Sophia Women's School (in memory of his wife) in 1868, a free public music school, a printing house, pharmacies, and primary schools for nearby villages.¹²¹

The clearest architectural expression of his enormous energy, however, was the brick mansion and adjacent service compound that he constructed for the company's headquarters in the center of Nerchinsk (figure 43). Built and lavishly furnished in the late 1870s, this mercantile "palace" is eclectic in style, although the gothic revival predominates through details such as the crenellation above the cornice (figure 44). Did Butin choose this style in expression of some distant spiritual kinship to the mercantile dynasties of Renaissance Italy? Perhaps the use of crenellation was a suitably imposing expression of his wealth and benevolent power within the community.

Whatever the impression created by the exterior, the extent of wealth and luxury was far more evident in the grand rooms of the interior. Although almost all of the mansion's interior was ultimately pilfered or vandalized, particularly after the 1917 revolution, Butin's Xanadu

continues to exist in a detailed, admiring description by George Kennan. Part of the mansion's impact on Kennan can be explained by the sheer improbability of its existence in so remote and difficult a part of Siberia, not far from the notorious Nerchinsk mines. The effect was increased still further after a miserable night spent by Kennan and his colleague George Frost at a hotel ("the very worst hotel that we had seen in Siberia") run by a Polish exile identified only as Klementovich.¹²²

With a letter of introduction provided by Mikhail Butin (now living in Irkutsk for reasons that will be explained below), Kennan's description of the mansion still conveys the vivid sense of surprise that will be familiar to anyone who has traveled extensively in Siberia:

Going into it from Klementovich's hotel was like going into Aladdin's palace from an East-Siberian *étape* [prisoner forwarding station—WB]; and as I entered the splendid ball-room, and caught the full-length reflection of my figure in the largest mirror in the world, I felt like rubbing my eyes to make sure that I was awake. One does not expect to find in the wilds of Eastern Siberia, nearly 5000 miles from St. Petersburg, a superb private residence with hardwood marquetry floors, silken curtains, hangings of delicate tapestry, stained-glass windows, splendid chandeliers, soft Oriental rugs, white-and-gold furniture upholstered with satin, old Flemish paintings, marble statues, family portraits



(43) M. D. BUTIN COMPOUND, WATER TOWER & WAREHOUSE.

from the skilful brush of Makofski, and an extensive conservatory filled with palms, lemon-trees, and rare orchids from the tropics. Such luxury would excite no remark in a wealthy and populous European city; but in the snowy wilderness of the Transbaikal, 3,000 miles from the boundary-line of Europe, it comes to the unprepared traveler with the shock of a complete surprise. [...] It seemed to me that I had rarely seen more evidences of wealth, refinement, and cultivated taste than were to be found within its walls.¹²³

Kennan, who had ample opportunity to see glittering interiors in America, could be an unsparing, acerbic critic of Russian life. His admiration of the Butin mansion, however, was unfeigned. The greatest praise was reserved for the main public rooms, especially the grand ballroom with its “orchestration, as big as a church organ” (appendix K, second part).¹²⁴

By the time George Kennan visited the Butin mansion, the Butins themselves were no longer in residence. Through a series of natural disasters and other reverses worthy of the Book of Job, their heavily leveraged firm had begun to unravel in 1879. Attacked by creditors and competitors in Irkutsk at a time of economic depression in Siberia, the Butins felt compelled to agree in 1882 to a court-appointed administration that proceeded to strip the firm of assets.¹²⁵ While Nikolai Butin stayed in Nerchinsk to defend the company’s interests there, Mikhail moved to Irkutsk in 1884 to follow the court proceedings and to

maintain important commercial contacts. Indeed, Kennan and Frost had met Mikhail Butin in Irkutsk several weeks before their arrival in Nerchinsk. Kennan described Butin as someone “who had traveled extensively in the United States and who was half an American in his ideas and sympathies.”¹²⁶

Butin eventually prevailed in 1892 to regain control of his firm, yet administrative mismanagement during the intervening ten years left only an empty shell with large debts. (The temporary administrators had paid themselves large fees at the expense of the firm.) Exhausted by the strain of constant legal and financial disputes, Nikolai Butin died in September 1892, at which point Mikhail Butin dismantled most of the company to cover debts.¹²⁷ The mansion was transferred to the Nerchinsk city administration. With the sale of his remaining profitable metalworking factories in 1896, Mikhail Butin devoted himself to writing, philanthropy, and social causes in Irkutsk, where he died in 1907.

Although the visions that the Butins had for the development of eastern Siberia, the entrepreneurial spirit that emanated from their company is still evident in the compound that they built in Nerchinsk. In a pattern typical of Muscovite family commercial enterprises, office and warehouse buildings were grouped adjacent to the residence, which occupied a dominant position at the intersection of two main streets.¹²⁸ Originally, the main facade of the residence was linked by a high



(44) M. D. BUTIN MANSION, WEST FACADE.



(45) M. D. BUTIN COMPOUND, WATER TOWER & WAREHOUSE.
(46) GOSTINY DVOR (MERCHANTS COURT).

brick wall and grand neoclassical archway (not extant) to the warehouse office, which contained an elaborately decorated two-story brick water tower (figure 45). The Butin compound possessed a general stylistic unity, with its white stuccoed walls and brick ornament culminating in crenelation along the cornices.

Notwithstanding the eclectic, historicist style of the Butin compound, the center of Nerchinsk is suffused with a provincial neoclassical ambience that one might associate with certain regional towns of the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. The defining component of the neoclassical ensemble is the Merchants' Court (figure 46), overlooking Bazaar Square.

The columnated center of the Merchants' Court is reflected in two other buildings in the vicinity of the square: the Hotel Dauria (figure 47) and the main pharmacy. Built during the second half of the nineteenth century, both the hotel and the pharmacy are essentially one-story structures with an elevated center (known in Russian as *mezzonin*). The pediment of the *mezzonin* rests on two Doric columns that frame a balcony supported by two smaller columns. This simple but effective transformation provides a grace note to the center of nineteenth-century Nerchinsk.

From Kennan's description it seems doubtful that the Hotel Dauria is the establishment that so irritated him in 1885. However, local lore has it that Anton Chekhov stayed in the Hotel Dauria in June 1890, five years after Kennan's visit. Although Chekhov had not yet achieved immortality as a playwright, he was already an immensely popular writer of short stories. Encouraged by friends such as the publisher Aleksei Suvorin and spurred by his own awareness of the evil of the forced exile system, Chekhov embarked in April 1890 on a trip across Siberia to reach Sakhalin Island, with its notorious penal colony. The ensuing work, *Sakhalin Island* (1893-

94), would become a major exposé not only of the island's penal administration but also of the lugubrious effects generally of Russian colonization in the Far East.¹²⁹

Chekhov's journey also resulted in a shorter account, "From Siberia," devoted to Siberia proper, with its mixture of natural grandeur and extreme living conditions. Consisting primarily of impressions from the road for Suvorin's newspaper, *Novoe vremia*, Chekhov's account, like Kennan's much longer work, frequently uses incidental details to show the pervasive effect of the exile system in Siberia. Chekhov did not, however, fulfill his original intention to describe the entire trip across Siberia.¹³⁰ Demanding travel conditions beyond Irkutsk prevented the writing of dispatches, and his primary goal was Sakhalin Island. Therefore, the historic town of Nerchinsk, and its hotel, did not appear in his published work on Siberia. Nerchinsk does, however, have laconic mention in Chekhov's correspondence with his family: *Vchera byl v Nerchinske. Gorodok ne akhti, no zhit' možno.* ("Yesterday was in Nerchinsk. Not a knockout of a town, but livable.")¹³¹

Although the waning of the tea trade had weakened the development of Nerchinsk, the town's location near a major river and the Trans-Siberian Railway sustained a modest level of prosperity evident not only at the Butin compound, but also in other substantial commercial buildings erected toward the end of the nineteenth century (figure 48). Apart from a few large masonry houses (figure 49), Nerchinsk consisted primarily of wooden dwellings, usually of one story, with ornamental window surrounds and cornices typical of Siberian architecture at the turn of the twentieth century (figures 50, 51).¹³² In some cases the dwellings are connected to a store (figure 52). Nerchinsk is now a dusty provincial town with a declining population of less than 16,000; yet the historic core reminds one of the century in which



(47) HOTEL DAURIA.



(48) BUTIN DEPARTMENT STORE.

it witnessed Anton Chekhov, George Kennan, Vasilii Kandinskii's merchant ancestors and Mikhail Butin, the "Siberian American."

On November 29 Kennan and Frost departed Nerchinsk, which had given them such a variety of impressions, positive and negative, and made their way through severe climate and terrain back towards Chita. Despite the rigors of the journey, there were moments of scandalous comic relief. At the final stage of the trip from Nerchinsk to Chita, Kennan and Frost were unable to obtain fresh post horses at the village of Turinopovorotnaia, near the small Tura River. Apparently, everyone of the few hundred souls in the village was drunk. After hours of chaos, a few stern words from Kennan found one sober driver and a team of horses that brought them to Chita (appendix L).¹³³

Chita

It can readily be asserted that Kennan was not impressed by Chita (appendix J). Yet even as Nerchinsk drifted into provincial torpor in the late nineteenth century, Chita was soon destined to assume a major role in Russia's Far Eastern expansion. From the Siberian exile outpost that Kennan and Frost saw in 1885 (figure G), Chita at the turn of the twentieth century became an overnight sensation, thronging with merchants and a boomtown at the junction of two major railroads.

Located at the confluence of the Chita and Ingoda Rivers, the site on which Chita is built had attracted the attention of Siberian explorer Petr Beketov in 1653, when he set up a winter post (*zimov'e*) there for ready access to the Ingoda. Although the first permanent settlement, called Sloboda, was established in the late 1670s, the post, renamed Chitinskaia sloboda in 1687, had a tenuous existence in extreme conditions. During the 1690s a few Cossacks, trappers, and fishermen were resettled to the post, yet their presence offered little impetus for development. For some two centuries the Chita settlement remained a secondary link in the administrative and transportation system within Dauria.¹³⁴

Chita's one notable landmark from the eighteenth century, the log Church of Archangel Michael, was originally built in 1705, shortly after the Chita settlement was elevated to the status of "fort" (*ostrog*). After a fire the church was apparently rebuilt in 1771, and then again in 1775.¹³⁵ Its patron was one Evgenii Gurkin, a merchant from distant Solvychevodsk in the far north of European Russia. (Northern merchants were frequently pioneers in the development of trade in Siberia, the Far East, and even Russian America.) The Archangel Michael Church (figure 53) is a good example of traditional wooden Orthodox architecture, with a central cuboid structure, a large polygonal apse in the east, and a vestibule and octagonal bell tower in the west. The central structure culminates in an octagonal drum and low dome. The form is thoroughly traditional, without the high tower forms that distinguish northern Russian log churches.¹³⁶ The church's excellent state of preservation is due in no small part to its reputation as "the church of the Decembrists," a reference to the Chita exile of some two dozen participants in the failed uprising against Nicholas I in December 1825.

During the Soviet era the Church of the Archangel Michael was converted into a museum devoted to the Decembrists and their exile in the Chita area, a function that it maintains to this day.¹³⁷ Indeed, for many observers Chita during the nineteenth century became identified with Siberian exile culture, particularly after 1851, when Chita became the administrative center of the Transbaikalian Territory (Zabaikal'skaia oblast') and headquarters of



(49) ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, NORTHEAST FACADE.
(50) LOG HOUSE, SHILOV STREET 15.



(51) WOODEN HOUSE, POGODAEV STREET 45.
(52) JEWISH HOUSE AND STORE, SOVETSKAIA ST. 12.

the Transbaikal Cossack Troops. Kennan, for example, described a number of meetings with Chita's political exiles, whom he saw as the moral inheritors of the Decembrist legacy.

In comparison with older urban centers along the main route to Siberia, Chita had few significant examples of church architecture. The eighteenth-century log Church of the Archangel Michael is by far the oldest surviving religious structure in the city. The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the completion of a wooden eparchal cathedral, and in 1899 the foundation was laid for a masonry cathedral, dedicated to Saint Alexander Nevskii. Construction of this ponderous structure, built of brick in the neo-Byzantine style, continued until 1909. In 1936 the cathedral was demolished and its brick used for the construction of a school and a military administrative building. Indeed, so extensive was the Soviet destruction of Russian Orthodox churches in Chita, that from 1944 the one remaining Orthodox parish met in a wooden church built in 1898 for a Catholic parish (figure 54).¹³⁸ In 2001 work began on a new cathedral, dedicated to the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.

With the arrival of the Trans-Siberian Railway in Chita in 1900, the town experienced a heady increase in building activity, propelled by Tatar and Jewish merchants interested in trade with China. Each of these communities built prominent houses of worship (figures 55, 56).

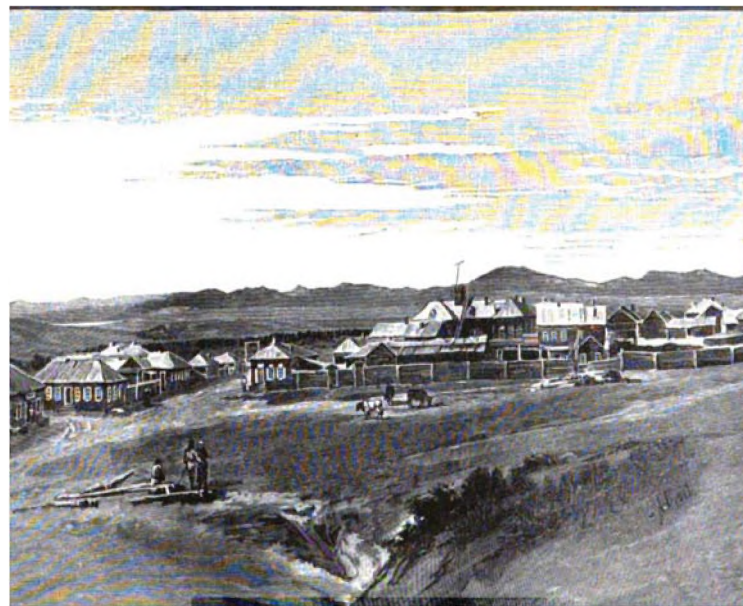
Chita's commercial possibilities accelerated still further with the completion of the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1903. The latter railroad, negotiated as part of an 1896 defense treaty with the weakened Chinese, allowed the Russians much shorter access, across Manchuria, to Vladivostok and surrounding territories along the Ussuri River.¹³⁹ As the nearest major settlement to the junction of the Chinese Eastern Railway with the still uncompleted Trans-Siberian, Chita seemed perfectly situated to play a commanding role in Russian designs on the Far East.

Photographic views of the town at the beginning of the twentieth century show large masonry buildings, often with art nouveau decorative flourishes, arising out of an expanse of dark Siberian muck.¹⁴⁰ If the population of Chita in 1900 was approximately 12,000, Baedeker gives the population in 1914 as 73,000, an extraordinary rate of growth driven by railroad expansion as well as trade with China via the city of Harbin.¹⁴

This rapid growth was not without the turbulence that afflicted Russia generally at the beginning of the twentieth century. As has been noted, the Nerchinsk-Chita area had long been used as a place of exile, and with the development of the railroad, the area acquired a substantial number of skilled workers, many of whom were not sympathetically disposed to the existing

political and economic order. Following a series of military failures in the Russo-Japanese War and triggered by the massacre of demonstrators in Saint Petersburg in January 1905 ("Bloody Sunday"), many areas of the country witnessed an outbreak of strikes and even armed rebellion. In Chita this uprising culminated in a short-lived "Chita Republic," which lasted from December 1905 to January 22, 1906. After offering some concessions toward greater political and religious freedom, the tsarist regime used military force to restore authority throughout the country in the aftermath of this "First Russian Revolution." In Siberia and the Far East the punitive campaign, including the execution of most of the leaders of the "Chita Republic,"¹⁴² was supervised by Baron Alexander Meller-Zakomelskii and General Paul von Rennenkampf, the latter notable for his lack of military success in both the Russo-Japanese and First World wars.

Chita, like other Siberian centers, seemed to recover quickly from the disorders of 1905-6, and a number of multi-storied masonry buildings arose over the following decade. Indeed, the architecture of central Chita is still defined by these large early twentieth-century structures. Some of them were clearly intended to suggest the decorative architectural styles of Russia's major cities. Such is the case with the eclectic K. I. Bulemakin Building (1907-11; figure 57) and the Beaux Arts style Shumov Building (1913-15; figure 58), both reminiscent of Saint Petersburg apartment and commercial buildings at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴³ The Shumov brothers, who made their money in trade and gold mining, erected a lavish monument to urban prosperity, with an elaborate



(G) A PART OF CHITA FROM THE HOTEL PETERBURG.



(53) LOG CHURCH OF ARCHANGEL MICHAEL, SOUTHEAST VIEW.
(54) ORTHODOX (FORMERLY CATHOLIC) CHURCH, SOUTH FACADE.





(55) MOSQUE, ANOKHIN STREET 3.



(56) SYNAGOGUE, INGODINSKAIA STREET 19, NORTH FACADE.

cornice and large decorative bays. As the most imposing building in town, it was appropriated by the NKVD in 1937 (the year of the Great Purges) and has since served its successor organizations

As in Petersburg, these large buildings were usually surfaced with stucco, but some were designed to exploit the decorative properties of red brick. A good example of Chita's "brick style" was the building constructed in 1902 for Vasilii Khlynovskii, who at the time served as mayor. Designed by Gavriil Nikitin, the building initially contained the Hotel Moskva, and from 1906-12 served as the Russo-Chinese Bank. The most distinctive feature of the Khlynovskii Building's facade was its twin cast-iron balconies (more accurately, loggias), with a dominant heraldic motif of eagle and dragons (figure 59). During the Soviet era the building's complex cornice was flattened and another story added, but the phantasmagoric ironwork still flanks a large central window, with its baroque pediment above the second story.

Not all commercial buildings in Chita followed conservative eclectic styles. Chita was a young city on the frontier of Russia's future in Asia, and its commercial architecture on occasion strove to embody a sense of modernity. The evolution of the contemporary look is evident in a row of buildings constructed for A. E. Dukhoi between 1907 and 1911 (figure 60), with more eclectic decorative detail in the earlier buildings and a "modernized," Viennese Secession-style treatment of detail in the final building (figure 61).¹⁴⁴ More obvious examples of the "style moderne," as modern commercial architecture was generally called in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, are the Zazovskii Building (1909-11; figure 62) and a three-story building commissioned by Dmitrii

Polutov, yet another wealthy Siberian entrepreneur whose fortune was based on trade and gold mining. Located on Cathedral Square across from the main Chita post office, the original part of the Polutov building was completed in 1908, with an expansion to its current size (figure 63) in 1914.

The most advanced, "rational" approach to commercial architecture in Chita appeared in the design for a department store and office building owned by the large Siberian retail firm of Vtorov. The patriarch of the family, Aleksandr Fedorovich Vtorov, began as a textile entrepreneur in the central Russian city of Kostroma, on the Volga River, and subsequently developed a fortune from selling textiles in Siberia during the latter half of the nineteenth century. From their base in Irkutsk, the Vtorov firm expanded throughout eastern Siberia (including Tomsk, Verkhneudinsk, and Troitskosavsk) and by the end of the century they had also established a major commercial and financial presence in Moscow, where the firm developed an advanced, rationalist style of commercial architecture.¹⁴⁵

In Chita the Vtorov Building (1911-12; figure 64) follows a similar style largely devoid of historicist decorative detail, although like most large buildings on corner lots in Chita, it had a rounded corner surmounted with a turret. The overall design, however, shows a clearly defined structural grid, surfaced with high-quality glazed white tiles. The facade's ample fenestration, culminating above the cornice in a Palladian thermal window (semicircular, divided into three lights by two vertical mullions), not only provides ample natural light for the office space but also proclaims the aesthetic values of modernity (figure 65). This crisp, refined integration of



(57) K. I. BULEMAKIN BUILDING, BUTIN STREET 33.
(58) SHUMOV BUILDING, LENIN STREET 84.



structure and ornament suggests architectural design on a major urban level and is commensurate with the Vtorov firm's reputation as an economic force in Moscow, as well as in Russia generally.

A number of commercial buildings in Chita combined retail operations with space for government

administrative offices. For example, the Regional Court (*okruzhnyi sud*) was located in a building owned by Ignatii Starnovskii, a merchant of Polish origins. Completed in 1907, the Starnovskii building offers a medley of decorative touches, but its most noticeable feature is its exaggerated art nouveau windows on the second story. The first floor was occupied by retail enterprises such as a wineshop. An even closer merging of administrative and commercial interests characterized the City Council Building, built in 1906-7 by Lucian Drevnovskii, a wealthy contractor (also of Polish origins) from Irkutsk. The city council (*duma*) occupied the upper floor and rented the ground floor to commercial tenants, thus increasing the *duma* budget.

The largest administrative building in Chita was built for the command of Transbaikalian Cossack Troops on Ataman Square. Completed in 1910, this sprawling red brick edifice combined the neo-romanesque with Italianate fortress details on the cornice (figure 66). It served both as Cossack headquarters and as the general office of the Amur Railway (part of the Trans-Siberian), which at that point was undergoing a major expansion from Nerchinsk to Khabarovsk. Space in the building was also rented for a hotel, a restaurant, and the Rekord Cinema.

The above survey is only a sample of Chita's construction boom in commercial buildings at the beginning of the twentieth century. The town also witnessed the construction of a number of schools, municipal buildings and private houses, some of which reached an opulent scale. One doubts that Kennan and Frost would have recognized the small, shabby town they visited in 1885 (figure H). Perhaps they would have



(59) B. V. KHLYNOVSKII BUILDING, MAIN FACADE.

(60) A. E. DUKHOIN BUILDING, NERCHINSK STREET 17.



(61) A. E. DUKHOI BUILDING, NERCHINSK STREET 21.



(62) ZAZOVSKII BUILDING, ANOKHIN STREET 56, SIDE FACADE.
(63) DIMITRII POLUTOV BUILDING, BUTIN STREET 39.



(64) VTOROV BUILDING.

been gratified, at least for a moment. Yet after 1914 these promising developments took an ominous turn, first with the blood-letting of the First World War, and then with the chaos of the Bolshevik Revolution and ensuing civil war, which drew Chita into a vortex of destruction and violence.¹⁴⁶

The fate of Chita was emblematic of so much of that part of Siberia traversed by Kennan and Frost. The exile system that Kennan had witnessed, described and forcefully criticized in his book, as well as his public lectures, collapsed under the weight of strains that not even he could have foreseen. In place of that system would come new, unimaginable forms of repression. Yet the region's cities and towns continued to exist and in some cases develop in productive, hopeful ways. Their surviving architectural heritage, examined above, provides not only a testimony to their endurance but also an essential visual link to their past. The values represented in this architectural heritage suggest a parallel narrative to the one presented in George Kennan's book. Each narrative complements the other, and each is essential for an understanding of the historical legacy of Dauria and the future development of the Transbaikal.



(65) VTOROV BUILDING.
(66) BUILDING OF COSSACK COMMAND

APPOINTMENT IN DAURIA



(H) HOUSE OF DECEMBRIST EXILES.
(I) POLITICAL EXILES' CARPENTER-SHOP, CHITA.

APPENDIX

Excerpts from George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System* (New York: The Century Company, 1891)

A. Vol. 2, pp. 61-62.

[...] Instead of proceeding directly to the [Nerchinsk convict—W.B.] mines, we decided to make a detour to the southward from Verkni Udinsk [Ulan-Ude—W. B.], for the purpose of visiting Kiakhta, the Mongolian frontier-town of Maimachin, and the great Buddhist lamasery of Goose Lake. We were tired of prisons and the exile system; we had had misery enough for a while; and it seemed to me that we should be in better condition to bear the strain of the mines if we could turn our thoughts temporarily into other channels and travel a little, as boys say, “for fun.” I was anxious, moreover, to see something of that corrupted form of the Buddhistic religion called Lamaism, which prevails so extensively in the Trans-Baikal, and which is there localized and embodied in the peculiar monastic temples known to the Russians as *datsans*, or *lamaseries*. The lamasery of Goose Lake had been described to us in Irkutsk as one of the most interesting and important of these temples, for the reason that it was the residence of the Khamba Lama, or Grand Lama of Eastern Siberia. It was distant only thirty versts from the village of Selenginsk, through which we must necessarily pass on our way to Kiakhta; we could visit it without much trouble, and we decided, therefore, to make it our first objective point.

B. Vol. 2, pp. 73-74.

If we had felt well, and had had a comfortable vehicle, we should have enjoyed this part of our journey very much; but as the result of sleeplessness, insufficient food, and constant jolting, we had little capacity left for the enjoyment of anything. We passed the town of Verkni Udinsk at a distance of two or three miles late Sunday afternoon, and reached Mukhinskoe, the next station of the Kiakhta road, about seven o'clock in the evening. Mr. Frost seemed to be comparatively fresh and strong; but I was feeling very badly, with a pain through one lung, a violent headache, great prostration, and a pulse so weak as to be hardly perceptible at the wrist. I did not feel able to endure another jolt nor to ride another yard; and although we had made only thirty-three miles that day we decided to stop for the night. Since landing in the Trans-Baikal we had had nothing to eat except bread, but at Mukhinskoe the station-master's wife gave us a good supper of meat, potatoes, and eggs. This, together with a few hours of troubled sleep which the fleas and bedbugs permitted us to get near morning, so revived our strength

that on Monday we rode seventy miles, and just before midnight reached the village of Selenginsk, near which was situated the lamasery of Goose Lake.

On the rough plank floor of the cold and dirty post-station house in Selenginsk we passed another wretched night. I was by this time in such a state of physical exhaustion that in spite of bedbugs and of the noise made by the arrival and departure of travelers I lost consciousness in a sort of stupor for two or three hours. When I awoke, however, at daybreak I found one eye closed and my face generally so disfigured by bedbug-bites that I was ashamed to call upon the authorities or even to show myself in the street. Cold applications finally reduced the inflammation, and about ten o'clock I set out in search of the Buriat chief of police, Khainuief Munku, who had been recommended to us as a good Russian and Buriat interpreter, and a man well acquainted with the lamasery that we desired to visit.

C. Vol. 2, pp. 85-88.

An East-Siberian lamasery is always, strictly speaking, a monastic establishment. It is situated in some lonely place, as far away as possible from any village or settlement, and consists generally of a temple, or place of worship, and from 50 to 150 log houses for the accommodation of the lamas, students, and acolytes, and for the temporary shelter of pilgrims, who come to the lamasery in great numbers on certain festival occasions. At the time of our visit three-fourths of the houses in the Goose Lake lamasery seemed to be empty. The *datsan*, or temple proper, stood in the middle of a large grassy inclosure [sic] formed by a high board fence. In plan it was nearly square, while in front elevation it resembled somewhat a three story pyramid. It seemed to be made of brick covered with white stucco, and there was a great deal of minute ornamentation in red and black along the cornices and over the portico. A good idea of its general outline may be obtained from the small sketch of this page, which was made from a photograph.

Upon entering this building from the portico on the first floor we found ourselves in a spacious but rather dimly lighted hall, the dimensions of which I estimated at 80 feet by 65. Large round columns draped with scarlet cloth supported the ceiling; the walls were almost entirely hidden by pictures of holy places, portraits of saints, and bright festooned draperies; while colored banners, streamers, and beautiful oriental lanterns hung ev-

erywhere in great profusion. The temple was so crowded with peculiar details that one could not reduce his observations to anything like order, nor remember half of the things that the eye noted; but the general effect of the whole was very striking, even to a person familiar with the interior of Greek and Roman Catholic cathedrals. The impression made upon my mind by the decorations was that of great richness and beauty, both in color and in form. Across the end of the temple opposite the door ran a richly carved lattice-work screen, or partition, in front of which, equidistant one from another, were there large chairs or throne. These thrones were covered with old-gold silk, were piled high with yellow cushions, and were intended for the Grand Lama, the Sheretui, or chief lama of the datsan, and his assistant. The throne of the Grand Lama was vacant, but the other two were occupied when we entered the temple. In front of these thrones, in two parallel lines, face to face, sat seventeen lamas with crossed legs on long, high divans covered with cushions and yellow felt. Opposite each one, in the aisle formed by the divans, stood a small red table on which lay two or three musical instruments. The lamas were all dressed alike in orange silk gowns, red silk scarfs, and yellow helmet-shaped hats faced with red. On each side of the door as we entered was an enormous drum,—almost as large as a hogshead—and the two lamas nearest us were provided with iron trumpets at least eight feet long and ten inches in diameter at the larger end. Both drums and trumpets were supported on wooden frames. Chairs were placed for us in the central aisle between the two lines of lamas, and we took our seats.

The scene at the beginning of the service was far more strange and impressive than I had expected it to be. The partial gloom of the temple, the high yellow thrones of the presiding dignitaries, the richness and profusion of the decorations, the colossal drums, the gigantic trumpets, the somber crowd of students and acolytes in black gowns at one end of the room, and the two brilliant lines of orange and crimson lamas at the other made up a picture the strange barbaric splendor of which surpassed anything of the kind that I have ever witnessed. For a moment after we took our seats there was a perfect stillness. Then the Sheretui shook a little globular rattle, and in response to the signal there burst forth a tremendous musical uproar, made by the clashing of cymbals, the deep-toned boom of the immense drums, the jangling of bells, the moaning of conch-shells, the tooting of horns, the liquid tinkle of triangles, and the hoarse bellowing of the great iron trumpets. It was not melody, it was not music; it was simply a tremendous instrumental uproar. It continued for about a minute, and then, as it suddenly ceased, the seventeen lamas began a peculiar, wild, rapid chant, in a deep, low monotone. The voices were exactly in accord, the time as perfect, and the end of every line

or stanza was marked by the clashing of cymbals and the booming of the colossal drums. This chanting continued for three or four minutes, and then it was interrupted by another orchestral charivari which would have leveled the walls of Jericho without any supernatural intervention. I had never heard such an infernal tumult of sound. Chanting, interrupted at intervals by the helter-skelter playing of twenty or thirty different instruments, made up the “thanksgiving” temple service, which lasted about fifteen minutes. It was interesting, but it was quite long enough.

D. Vol. 2, pp. 88-89.

Mr. Frost and I then walked around the temple, accompanied by the Sheretui and Khaninuief. Behind the lattice-work screen there were three colossal idols in the conventional sitting posture of the Buddhists, and in front of each of them were lighted tapers of butter, porcelain bowls of rice, wheat, and millet, artificial paper flowers, fragrant burning pastils, and bronze bowls of consecrated water. Against the walls, all around this part of the temple, were bookcases with glass doors in which were thousands of the small figures known to the Christian world as “idols” and called by the Buriats burkhans. I could not ascertain the reason for keeping so great a number of these figures in the lamasery, nor could I ascertain what purpose they served. They presented an almost infinite variety of types and faces; many of them were obviously symbolical, and all seemed to be representative in some way either of canonized mortals or of supernatural spirits, powers, or agencies. According to the information furnished me by Khainuief, these burkhans, or idols, occupy in the lamaistic system of religious belief the same place that images or pictures of saints fill in the Russian system.

E. Vol. 2, pp. 98-100.

About nine o'clock Tuesday evening we returned from the lamasery, and at eleven o'clock on the same night we ordered post-horses at Selenginsk and set out for the Russo-Mongolian frontier town of Kiakhta, distant about sixty miles. We ought to have arrived there early on the following morning; but in Siberia, and particularly in the Trans-Baikal, the traveler is always detained more or less by petty unforeseen accidents and misadventures. We were stopped at midnight about six versts from Selenginsk by an unbridged river. Communication between the two shores was supposed to be maintained by means of a karbas, or rude ferryboat; but as the boat happened to be on the other side of the stream, it was of no use to us unless we could awaken the ferryman by calling to him. Singly and in chorus we shouted “Kar-ba-a-s!” at short intervals for an hour, without getting any response except a faint mocking echo from the opposite cliffs.

Cold, sleepy, and discouraged, we were about to give it up for the night and return to Selenginsk, when we saw the dark outlines of a low, raft-like boat moving slowly up-stream in the shadow of the cliffs on the other side. It was the long-looked-for karbas. In half an hour we were again under way on the southern side of the river, and at three o'clock in the morning we reached the post-station of Povorotnaya. Here, of course, there were no horses. The station-house was already full of travelers asleep on the floor, and there was nothing for us to do except to lie down in an unoccupied corner near the oven, between two Chinese and a pile of medicinal deer-horns, and to get through the remainder of the night as best we could.

All day Wednesday we rode southward through a rather dreary and desolate region of sandy pine barrens or wide stretches of short dead grass, broken here and there by low hills covered with birches, larches, and evergreens. Now and then we met a train of small one-horse wagons loaded with tea that had come overland across Mongolia from Peking, or two or three mounted Buriats in dishpan-shaped hats and long brown kaftans, upon the breasts of which had been sewn zigzags of red cloth that suggested a rude Mongolian imitation of the Puritan "scarlet letter." As a rule, however, the road seemed to be little traveled and scantily settled, and in a ride of nearly fifty miles we saw nothing of interest except here and there on the summits of hills small sacred piles of stones which Mr. Frost called "Buriat shrines." All over Siberia it is the custom of the natives when they cross the top of a high hill or mountain to make a propitiatory offering to the spirits of storm and tempest. In the extreme north-eastern part of Siberia these offerings consist generally of tobacco, and are thrown out on the ground in front of some prominent and noticeable rock: but in the Trans-Baikal the Buriats and Mongols are accustomed to pile a heap of stones beside the road, erect thereon half a dozen rods or poles, and suspend from the latter small pieces of their clothing. Every pious traveler who passes a shrine of this sort on the summit of a mountain is expected to alight from his vehicle or dismount from his horse, tear off a little piece of his kaftan or his shirt, hang it up on one of these poles, and say a prayer. As a result of this ceremonial, every shrine presents to the traveler a sort of tailor's collection of scraps and remnants of cloth of every conceivable kind, quality, and color, fluttering to the wind from slender poles that look like hastily improvised fishing-rods.

F. Vol. 2, pp. 100-05.

The weather all day Wednesday was raw and cold, with occasional squalls of rain or snow. We could get little to eat at the post-stations, and long before it grew dark we were faint, hungry, and chilled to the bone. Nothing could have been more pleasant under such circumstances

than to see at last the cheerful glow of the fire-lighted windows in the little log houses of Troitskosavsk, two miles and a half north of the Mongolian frontier.

The three towns of Troitskosavsk, Kiakhta, and Maimachin are so situated as to form one almost continuous settlement extending across the Russo-Mongolian frontier about a hundred miles south and east of Lake Baikal. Troitskosavsk and Kiakhta are on the northern side of the boundary line, while Maimachin is on the southern or Mongolian side and is separated from Kiakhta by a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards of unoccupied neutral ground. Of the three towns Troitskosavsk is the largest, and from an administrative point of view the most important; but Kiakhta is nearest to the border and is best known by name to the world.

Acting upon the advice of a merchant's clerk whose acquaintance we had made on the Lake Baikal steamer, we drove through Troitskosavsk to Kiakhta and sought shelter in a house called "Sokolof's," which the merchant's clerk had given us to understand was a good and comfortable hotel. When after much search we finally found it, we were surprised to discover that there was not a sign of a hotel about it. The house stood in the middle of a large, wall-inclosed yard, its windows were dark, and although the hour was not a very late one the courtyard gate was shut and closely barred. After shouting, knocking, and kicking at the gate for five or ten minutes we succeeded in arousing a sharp-tongued maid-servant, who seemed disposed at first to regard us as burglars or brigands. Upon becoming assured, however, that we were only peaceable travelers in search of lodgings, she informed us with some asperity that this was not a hotel, but a private house. Mr. Sokolof, she said, sometimes received travelers who came to him with letters of introduction; but he did not open his doors to people whom nobody knew anything about, and the best thing we could do, in her opinion, was to go back to Troitskosavsk. As we had no letters of introduction, and as the young woman refused to open the gate or hold any further parley with us, there was obviously nothing for us to do but to recognize the soundness of her judgment and take her advice. We therefore climbed into our teluga, drove back to Troitskosavsk, and finally succeeded in finding there a Polish exile named Klembotski, who kept a bakery and who had a few rooms that he was willing to rent, even to travelers who were not provided with letters of introduction. As it was after ten o'clock, and as we despaired of finding a better place, we ordered our baggage taken to one of Mr. Klembotski's rooms. It did not prove to be a very cheerful apartment. The floor was made of rough-hewn planks, the walls were of squared logs chinked with hemp-fibers there was no furniture except a pine table, three stained pine chairs, and a narrow wooden couch or bedstead, and all guests were expected

to furnish their own bedding. After a meager supper of tea and rolls we lay down on the hard plank floor and tried to get to sleep, but were forced, as usual, to devote a large part of the night to researches and investigations in a narrowly restricted and uninteresting department of entomology. Thursday forenoon we hired a peculiar Russian variety of Irish jaunting-car, known in Siberia as a *dalgushka*, and set out for Kiakhtha, where we intended to call upon a wealthy Russian tea-merchant named Lushnikof, who had been recommended to us by friends in Irkutsk.

Troitskosavsk, Kiakhtha, and Maimachin are situated in a shallow and rather desolate valley, beside a small stream that falls into the Selenga River. The nearly parallel and generally bare ridges that form this valley limit the vision in every direction except to the southward, where, over the housetops and gray wooden walls of Maimachin, one may catch a glimpse of blue, hazy mountains far away in Mongolia. Kiakhtha, which stands on the border-line between Mongolia and Siberia, does not appear at first sight to be anything more than a large, prosperous village. It contains a greater number of comfortable-looking two-story log dwelling-houses than are to be found in most East-Siberian villages, and it has one or two noticeable churches of the Russo-Greek type with white walls and belfries surmounted by colored or gilded domes; but one would never suppose it to be the most important commercial point in Eastern Siberia. Through Kiakhtha, nevertheless, pass into or out of Mongolia every year Russian and Chinese products to the value of from twenty to thirty million rubles (\$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000). Nearly all of the famous "overland" tea consumed in Russia is brought across Mongolia in caravans from northern China, enters the Empire through Kiakhtha, and after being carefully repacked and sewn up in raw hides is transported across Siberia a distance of nearly four thousand miles to St. Petersburg, Moscow, or the great annual fair of Nizhni Novgorod. Through Kiakhtha are also imported into Russia silks, crapes, and other distinctively Chinese products, together with great quantities of compressed, or "brick," for the poorer classes of the Russian people and for the Kirghis, Buriats, and other native tribes. The chief exports to the Chinese Empire are Russian manufactures, medicinal deerhorns, ginseng, furs, and precious metals in the shape of Russian, English, and American coins. Even the silver dollars of the United States find their way into the Flowery Kingdom through Siberia. Among the Russian merchants living in Kiakhtha are men of great wealth, some of whom derive from their commercial transactions in general, and from the tea trade in particular, incomes varying from \$75,000 to \$150,000 per annum.

We found Mr. Lushnikof living in a comfortably furnished two-story house near the center of the town, and

upon introducing ourselves as American travelers were received with the sincere and cordial hospitality that seems to be characteristic of Russians everywhere, from Bering Strait to the Baltic Sea. In the course of lunch, which was served soon after our arrival, we discussed the "sights" of Kiakhtha and Maimachin and were informed by Mr. Lushnikof that in his opinion there was very little in either town worthy of a foreign traveler's attention. Maimachin might perhaps interest us if we had never seen a Chinese or Mongolian city, but Kiakhtha did not differ essentially from other Siberian settlements of its class.

After a moment's pause he asked suddenly, as if struck by a new thought, "Have you ever eaten a Chinese dinner?"

"Never," I replied.

"Well," he said, "then there is one new experience that I can give you. I'll get up a Chinese dinner for you in Maimachin day after to-morrow. I know a Chinese merchant there who has a good cook, and although I cannot promise you upon such short notice a dinner of more than forty courses, perhaps it will be enough to give you an idea of the thing."

We thanked him, and said that although we had had little to eat since we entered the Trans-Baikal except bread and tea, we thought that a dinner of forty courses would be fully adequate to satisfy both our appetites and our curiosity.

From the house of Mr. Lushnikof we went to call upon the Russian boundary commissioner, Mr. Sulkofski, who lived near at hand and who greeted us with as much informal good-fellowship as if we had been old friends. We were very often surprised in these far-away parts of the globe to find ourselves linked by so many persons and associations to the civilized world and to our homes. In the house of Mr. Lushnikof, for example, we had the wholly unexpected pleasure of talking in English with Mrs. Hamilton, a cultivated Scotch lady, who had come to Kiakhtha across China and Mongolia and had been for several years a member of Mr. Lushnikov's family. [...]

After another lunch and a pleasant chat of an hour or more with Mr. Sulkofski, Frost and I returned to Troitskosavsk and spent the remainder of the afternoon in exploring the bazaar, or town market, and the queer Chinese and Mongolian shops shown in the above illustration.

G. Vol. 2, pp. 107-9.

On Friday, October 2d, Mr. Frost and I again visited Kiakhtha and went with the boundary commissioner, Mr. Sulkofski, to call upon the Chinese governor of Maimachin. The Mongolian town of Maimachin is separated from Kiakhtha by a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards of neutral ground, through the middle of

which is supposed to run the boundary line between the two great empires. Maimachin is further separated from Kiakhtha by a high plank wall and by screens, or pagoda-shaped buildings, that mask the entrances to the streets so that the outside barbarian cannot look into the place without actually entering it, and cannot see anything beyond its wooden walls after he has entered it. It would be hard to imagine a more sudden and startling change than that brought about by a walk of two hundred yards from Kiakhtha to Maimachin. One moment you are in a Russian provincial village with its characteristic shops, log houses, golden-domed churches, droshkies, and familiar peasant faces; the next moment you pass behind the high screen that conceals the entrance to the Mongolian town and find yourself apparently in the middle of the Chinese Empire. You can hardly believe that you have not been suddenly transported to the magical carpet of the "Arabian Nights" over a distance of a thousand miles. The town in which you find yourself is no more like the town that you have just left than a Zuni pueblo is like a village in New England, and for all that appears to the contrary you might suppose yourself to be separated from the Russian Empire by the width of a whole continent. The narrow, unpaved streets are shut in by gray, one-story houses, whose windowless walls are made of clay mixed with chopped straw, and whose roofs, ornamented with elaborate carving, show a tendency to turn up at the corners; clumsy two-wheel ox-carts, loaded with boxes of tea and guided by swarthy Mongol drivers, have taken the place of the Russian horses and telegas; Chinese traders in skull-caps, loose flopping gowns, and white-soled shoes appear at the doors of the courtyards instead of the Russian merchants in top-boots, loose waistcoats, and shirts worn outside their trousers whom you have long been accustomed to see; and wild-looking sunburned horsemen in deep orange gowns and dishpan-shaped hats ride in now and then from some remote encampment in the great desert of Gobi, followed, perhaps, by a poor Mongol from the immediate neighborhood, mounted upon a slow-pacing ox. Wherever you go, and in whatever direction you look, China has taken the place of Russia, and the scenes that confront you are full of strange, unfamiliar details.

H. Vol. 2, pp. 118-19.

On the 15th of October Mr. Frost and I left Troitskosavsk for Selenginsk. I felt very weak and dizzy that morning, and feared that I was about to have a relapse; but I thought that even a jolting telega in the open air could hardly be a worse place in which to be sick than the vermin-infested room that I had so long occupied, and I determined that if I had strength enough to walk out to a vehicle I would make a start. We rode about sixty miles that day, spent the night in the post-station of Povorot-

naya, and reached Selenginsk early the next forenoon. In this wretched little Buriat village there were three interesting political exiles whom I desired to see, and we stopped there for one day for the purpose of making their acquaintance.

I. Vol. 2, pp. 123.

We left Selenginsk at four o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, October 16th, and after a ride of a hundred and eight miles, which we made in less than twenty-four hours, reached the district town of Verknii Udinsk. The weather, particularly at night, was cold and raw, and the jolting of the springless post-vehicles was rather trying to one who had not yet rallied from the weakness and prostration of fever; but the fresh open air was full of invigoration, and I felt no worse, at least, than at the time of our departure from Troitskosavsk, although we had made in two days and nights a distance of a hundred and seventy miles. There were two prisons in Verknii Udinsk that I desired to inspect; and as early as possible Sunday morning I called upon the ispravnik, introduced myself as an American traveler, exhibited my open letters, and succeeded in making an engagement with that official to meet him at the old prison about noon.

J. Vol. 2, pp. 127-29.

We left Verknii Udinsk on Monday, October 19th, for a ride about three hundred miles to the town of Chita, which is the capital of the Trans-Baikal. The weather was more wintry than any that we had yet experienced; but no snow had fallen, the sky was generally clear, and we did not suffer much from cold except at night. At first the road ran up the shallow, barren uninteresting valley of the Uda River, between nearly parallel ranges of low mountains, and presented, so far as we could see, little that was interesting. The leaves had all fallen from the trees; the flowers, with the exception of here and there a frost-bitten dandelion, had entirely disappeared; and winter was evidently close at hand. We traveled night and day without rest, stopping only now and then to visit a Buddhist lamasery by the roadside or to inspect an étape. The Government has recently expended three or four hundred thousand rubles (\$150,000 to \$200,000) in the erection of a line of new étapes through the Trans-Baikal. These buildings, the general appearance of which is shown in one of the three combined illustrations on page 126, are rather small and are not well spoken of by the officers of the exile administration; but they seemed to us to be a great improvement upon the étapes between Tomsk and Irkutsk.

On Thursday, October 22nd, about fifty miles from Chita we crossed a high mountainous ridge near the post-station of Domnokluchefskaya, and rode down its eastern slope to one of the tributaries of the great river Amur. We

had crossed the watershed that divides the river systems of the arctic [sic] ocean from the river systems of the Pacific, and from that time America began to seem nearer to us across the Pacific than across Siberia. American goods of all kinds, brought from California, suddenly made their appearance in the village shops; and as I saw the American tin-ware, lanterns, and "Yankee notions," and read the English labels on the cans of preserved peaches and tomatoes, it seemed to me as if in the immediate future we ought from some high hill to catch sight of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. A few kerosene lamps and a shelf full of canned fruits and vegetables brought us in imagination five thousand miles nearer home.

About noon we arrived cold, tired and hungry at the Trans-Baikal town of Chita, and took up our quarters in a hotel kept by a Polish exile and known as the "Hotel Peterburg." Chita, which is the capital of the Trans-Baikal and the residence of the governor, is a large, straggling, provincial town of about four thousand inhabitants, and, as will be seen from the illustration on page 129, does not differ essentially from other Siberian towns of its class. It has a public library, a large building used occasionally as a theater, and fairly good schools; politically and socially it is perhaps the most important place in the territory of which it is the capital. Its chief interest for us, however, lay in the fact that it is a famous town in the history of the exile system. To Chita were banished, between 1825 and 1828, most of the gallant young noblemen who vainly endeavored to overthrow the Russian autocracy and to establish a constitutional form of government at the accession to the throne of the Emperor Nicholas in December, 1825. Two of the log houses in which these so-called Decembrist exiles lived are still standing, and one of them is now occupied as a carpenter's shop, and serves as a general rendezvous for later politicals who followed the example set by the Decembrists and met the same fate.

K. Vol. 2, pp. 319-24.

The Savenski mine was the last one that we visited in Eastern Siberia. Monday afternoon, November 23d, we drove to the Nerchinski Zavod, or Nerchinsk Works, a large village about ten miles from Gorni Zerentui, and Tuesday morning we set out on our return journey to the Shilka River and the town of Nerchinsk, distant about two hundred miles. It is not necessary to describe in detail our long, tedious, and exhausting ride. The country through which we passed was a dreary desert of low, rolling mountains, thinly covered with snow, the thermometer ranged constantly from zero to twenty-seven degrees below; the roads were generally rough, hard-frozen, and bare; the telegas and tarantases furnished us were the worst and most uncomfortable vehicles of their kind in all Eastern Siberia' and we suffered from cold, hunger,

jolting, and sleeplessness until we were reduced to a state of silent, moody, half-savage exasperation, in which life—or at least such a life—seemed no longer worth living, and we were ready to barter all our earthly rights and possessions for a hot bath, a good dinner, and twelve hours of unbroken sleep in a warm, clean bed.

At four o'clock Thursday morning, a little more than forty hours after leaving the Nerchinski Zavod, we reached the post-station of Biankinskaya, on the bank of the Shilka River, and, transferring our baggage for the first time from a wheeled vehicle to a sledge, we continued our journey to Nerchinsk over the ice in a temperature of twenty degrees below zero. We had had for several days very little to eat, and in the absence of nourishing food the intense cold forced me to put on, one over another, no less than three heavy sheepskin shubas, which extended from my neck to my heels and transformed me into a huge perambulating cotton bale surmounted by a fur cap and a dirty, unshaven, frost-bitten face. Even under all my furs I was cold to the very marrow of my bones; and Mr. Frost, who had only two warm coats and wore only one, suffered much more than I did. When we reached Nerchinsk, late that forenoon, we found that there was no snow in the streets, and as our underfed and feeble horses could not drag us over bare ground, we alighted from our sledge and waddled ingloriously behind it into the city, like stiff-jointed arctic mummies marching after the hearse in a funeral procession.

At Nerchinsk, for the first time in a month, we stopped in a hotel; but in point of cleanliness and comfort it was far inferior to the zemski kvartirs in which we had slept at the mines. It was, in fact, the very worst hotel that we had seen in Siberia. The main hall, which divided the one-story log building into halves, was dark and dirty, and had been fitted up with shelves in order that it might serve also as a butler's pantry; the room to which we were shown was chilly and bare, and its stale, heavy atmosphere was pervaded by a faint odor of ugar, or charcoal gas; half of the paper had fallen or been torn from the walls and was hanging here and there in ragged strips; yellow, dirt-incrusted paint was peeling in flakes from window-sashes and casings that apparently had never been dusted or washed; the rough, uncovered plank floor was not only dirty, but had sunk unevenly in places and was full of rat-holes; cockroaches were running briskly over the tea-stained, crumb-besprinkled cotton cloth that covered the only table in the room; there was no bed upon which the tired wayfarer might repose, nor mirror in which he might have the melancholy satisfaction of surveying his frost-bitten countenance. The only servant in the establishment was a half-grown boy in top-boots and a red flannel shirt; and the greenish-yellow brass pan that he brought us to wash our hands and faces over had evidently been used habitually for another and

a much more ignoble purpose, and had never been rinsed or cleaned. Tired, cold, and hungry, and accustomed as we were to dirt, disorder, and discomfort, we regarded this cheerless, neglected hotel with dismay; but it was the only one that the place afforded, and we were compelled to make the best of it. The proprietor was an exiled Pole named Klementovich, and I could not help thinking that if he kept in Poland such a hotel as he maintained in Nerchinsk, there were reasons enough, based upon sound public policy and a due regard for the general welfare, to justify his banishment by administrative process to the most remote part of Siberia, regardless of his political opinions. After a breakfast of tea, sour rye-bread, and greasy pancakes, we set our dress to rights as well as we could before a diminutive mirror that the proprietor finally brought us, and walked out to take a look at the town and deliver one or two letters of introduction.

The town of Nerchinsk, which has about 4,000 inhabitants, is situated on the left bank of the Nercha River, two or three miles above the junction of the latter with the Shilka, and about 4600 miles east of St. Petersburg. In point of culture and material prosperity it seemed to me to compare favorably with most East-Siberian towns of its class. It has a bank, two or three schools, a hospital with twenty beds, a library, a museum, a public garden with a fountain, and fifty or sixty shops, and its trade in furs and manufactured goods from European Russia amounts to about \$1,000,000 per annum. The most striking feature of the town to a new-comer is the almost palatial residence of the wealthy mining proprietor Butin, which would compare favorably not only with any house in Siberia, but with most houses in the capital of the Empire. The Butin brothers were in financial difficulties at the time of our visit to Nerchinsk, and all of their property was in the hands of a receiver; but we had a note of introduction to the latter from the younger member of the firm, and upon presentation of it we were allowed to inspect the deserted but still beautiful mansion. Going into it from Klementovich's hotel was like going into Aladdin's palace from an East-Siberian *étape*; and as I entered the splendid ball-room, and caught the full-length reflection of my figure in the largest mirror in the world, I felt like rubbing my eyes to make sure that I was awake. One does not expect to find in the wilds of Eastern Siberia, nearly 5000 miles from St. Petersburg, a superb private residence with hardwood marquetry floors, silken curtains, hangings of delicate tapestry, stained-glass windows, splendid chandeliers, soft Oriental rugs, white-and-gold furniture upholstered with satin, old Flemish paintings, marble statues, family portraits from the skilful brush of Makofski, and an extensive conservatory filled with palms, lemon-trees, and rare orchids from the tropics. Such luxury would excite no remark in a wealthy and populous European city; but in the

snowy wilderness of the Trans-Baikal, 3,000 miles from the boundary-line of Europe, it comes to the unprepared traveler with the shock of a complete surprise. The house had not been occupied for several months, and of course did not appear at its best; but it seemed to me that I had rarely seen more evidences of wealth, refinement, and cultivated taste than were to be found within its walls. The ball-room, which was the largest room in the house, was about sixty-five feet in length by forty-five in width, and over it, in a large semicircular gallery reached by a grand stairway, there was an orchestion, as big as a church organ, which played sixty or seventy airs and furnished music for the entertainments that the Butins, in the days of their prosperity, were accustomed to give to the people of the town. The library, which was another spacious apartment, was filled with well-selected books, newspapers, and magazines, in three or four languages, and contained also a large collection of Siberian minerals and ores. Adjoining the house were the offices and shops where the Butins carried on the various branches of their extensive and diversified business, and where they had accumulated the wealth that the house partly represented or embodied. In addition to gold-mining, they were engaged in trading, distilling, iron-manufacturing, and the construction of steamers, and their business operations extended to all part of Eastern Siberia, and gave employment to many hundreds of men.

L. Vol. 2, pp. 325-29.

Sunday morning, November 29th, after bidding good-by with sincere regret to Mr. and Mrs. Charushin, whose warm hearts and lovable characters had won our affection and esteem, we left Nerchinsk in a sleigh for Chita, the capital of the Trans-Baikal.

The icicles that hung from the nostrils of our frost-whitened horses, the sharp metallic creaking of the crisp snow under our sledge-runners, the bluish, opalescent tints of the distant mountains, and the high, slender columns of smoke that stood, without waver or tremble, over the chimneys of the houses were all evidences of a very low, if not an arctic temperature; and I was not surprised, when I looked at our thermometer, to find the mercury stationary at twenty-seven degrees below zero. As night came on, the intensity of the cold increased until it was all that we could do to endure it from one post-station to another. We drank three or four tumblers of hot tea every time we stopped to change horses; but in the long, lonely hours between midnight and morning, when we could get no warm food and when all our vital powers were usually at their lowest ebb, we suffered very severely. We had no difficulty in getting post-horses until just before dark Monday evening, when we reached the station of Turinopovorotnaya, about fifty miles from

Chita, and found the whole village in a state of hilarious intoxication.

* * *

We piled our baggage into the sleigh, climbed in upon it, and rode out of the intoxicated settlement with thankful hearts. As the last faint sounds of revelry died away in the distance behind us, I said to the driver: "What's the matter with everybody in this village? The whole population seems to be drunk."

"They've been consecrating a new church," said the driver, soberly.

"Consecrating a church!" I exclaimed in amazement. "Is that the way you consecrate churches?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Sometimes they drink. After the services they had a gulainia [a sort of holiday promenade with music and spirituous refreshments], and some of them crooked their elbows too often."

"Some of them!" I repeated. "All of them, you mean. You're the only sober man I've seen in the place. How does it happen that you're not drunk?"

"I'm not a Christian," he replied with quiet simplicity. "I'm a Buriat."

* * *

At about ten o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, December 1st, we drove into the town of Chita, and took up our quarters in a small, one-story log hotel kept by a man name Biachinski and known as the "Hotel Vladivostok."

NOTES

1. The significance of George Kennan's writings on Russia and their reception in the United States is examined in Frederick F. Travis, *George Kennan and the American-Russian relationship, 1865-1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).

2. George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2 vols. (New York: The Century Co., 1891), vol. 2, pp. 61-62. The maps in the current publication are taken from this edition.

3. For a survey of the history and an analysis of the architectural heritage of Irkutsk, see William Brumfield, *Irkutsk: Arkhitekturnoe nasledie v fotografiakh* (Moscow: Tri Kvadrata, 2006).

4. See, for example, the excellent annotated Russian edition, translated by I. A. Bogdanov and edited by E. I. Melamed, *Sibir' i ssylka* (St. Petersburg: Russko-Baltiiskii informatsionnyi tsentr BLITs, 1999).

5. The William C. Brumfield collection can be accessed under "Digital Collections" at the Library of Congress "Meeting of Frontiers" site: <http://frontiers.loc.gov>. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Blair A. Ruble, director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC.

6. A detailed study of this movement is presented in Aleksandr R. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia i Priamur'ia vo vtoroi poloviny XVII-XVIII vv.* (Vladivostok: DVO RAN, 1999), 40, 47-48.

7. These developments are discussed below in the section "Nerchinsk (and Albazin)."

8. An examination of the Udinsk fort is contained in Aleksei V. Tivanenko, *Udinskii ostrog: pervoe stoletie Ulan-Ude* (Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN, 1995).

9. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 72-75. At least two major embassies sent by Peter I (in 1693 and 1719) passed through Udinsk. On the latter see John Bell, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Peking (1719-22)*, edited with an introduction by J. L. Stevenson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966).

10. Archival sources on the construction history of the Hodigitria Cathedral are presented in Valerii K. Gur'ianov, *Po Bol'shoi, Bol'shoi Nikolaevskoi* (Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN, 1998), 28-29. See also Ekaterina S. Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy v Zabaikal'e (XVII-nach. XX vv.)* (Ulan-Ude: BGU, 1997), 27-29; and Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 21-25.

11. References to the cathedral within the broader context of Siberian church architecture are noted in T. S. Proskuriakova, "O traditsionalizme v monumental'noi arkhitekture Sibiri XVIII v.," *Arkhitekturnoe nasledstvo*, 34 (1986): 119-20. On the Irkutsk churches, with photographic documentation, see Brumfield, *Irkutsk*.

12. For information on the demolished Savior Church, see Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 31.

13. The plans of Udinsk are reproduced in Liudvig K. Minert, *Pamiatniki arkhitektury Buriatii* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1983), 17. The advent of Soviet power in Transbaikalian area ultimately transformed the urban environment of Verkhneudinsk, whose name was changed in 1934 to Ulan-Ude (Red Uda, in reference to the Uda River).

14. The north altar of the Trinity Church vestibule was

dedicated in 1818 to the Intercession of the Virgin. The south chapel, added four decades later, was dedicated in 1856 to Saint Innokentii of Irkutsk. See Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 25; and Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 30-31.

15. The checkered construction history of the Merchants Court, with a general plan, is presented in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 26-28. See also Gur'ianov, *Po Bol'shoi*, 67-69, with an excellent photograph taken in 1917 from the tower of the Administrative Building (*Prisutstvennye mesta*; now substantially rebuilt) and including both the Merchants Court and the Trading Rows. See also T. S. Proskuriakova, "Ulan-Ude (byvshii Verkhneudinsk)," *Arkhitekturnoe nasledstvo*, 31 (1983): 76-88.

16. The Trading Rows construction and alteration are described in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 28-29. For further information on the Kurbatov dynasty, see Gur'ianov, *Po Bol'shoi*, 82. In the 1950s the building was adapted for use as a clinic, and in 1957 a second story was added to the trading rows by the architect A. P. Vampilov.

17. The house at Pochtamt Street No. 22 has been transferred to the Ethnographic Museum of the Peoples of Transbaikalia. A detailed description of the house, with plans, is contained in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 35-36.

18. Liliia Kal'mina and Leonid V. Kuras, *Evreiskaia obshchina v zapadnom Zabaikal'e* (Ulan-Ude: BNTs, 1999), 79. This volume is a pioneering study of the settlement of Jews in the Transbaikalian area, with extensive archival research.

19. The names are drawn from a list compiled in Gur'ianov, *Po Bol'shoi*, 145-55, with archival photographs of some of the buildings on pages. 92-93.

20. Material on the Transbaikalian Jewish houses of prayer is contained in Kal'mina and Kuras, *Evreiskaia obshchina*, 103-06.

21. See N. A. Petunova, ed., *Gosudarstvennyi spisok nedvizhimikh pamiatnikov istorii i kul'tury Respubliki Buriatii* (Ulan-Ude: Ministerstvo kul'tury Respubliki Buriatii, 1999), 55. One of the best preserved wooden houses in Kabansk is the Eidelman house, built at the end of the nineteenth century.

22. On the founding of Selenginsk, see Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 64-65; and Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 83-84.

23. On the siege of Selenginsk see Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 67.

24. The role of the Russian merchant Ivan Savvateev in opening this new route is noted in O. I. Kashik, "Torgovlia v Vostochnoi Sibiri v XVII-nachale XVIII v.," in V. I. Shunkov, ed., *Voprosy istorii Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka: trudy konferentsii* (Novosibirsk: 1961), 195-96.

25. On the Raguzinskii rebuilding initiatives and the extent of Hannibal's participation, see V. I. Kochedamov, *Pervye russkie goroda Sibiri* (Moscow: Stroiizdat, 1978), 142; Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 85-86; and Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 70.

26. Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 87-88. Further information on the Savior Cathedral is contained in Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 36-37.

27. On the Totma decorative elements, see V. P. Vygodov, "Arkhitectura barokko v Tot'me," in V. P. Vygodov, et al, eds.,

Pamiatniki russkoi arkhitektury i monumental'nogo iskusstva (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 119. See also William Brumfield, *Tot'ma: arkhitekturnoe nasledie v fotografiakh* (Moscow: Tri Kvadrata, 2005).

28. On the Cathedral of the Ascension in Novoselinginsk, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 93-94; and Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 38-39.

29. The monument, which specifically commemorates the death of Yuille's wife, Martha Cowie, in 1827, and the work of the British missionaries are briefly discussed in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 93, 185. Further information is contained in Adolph Erman, *Reise um die Erde durch Nord-Asien und die beiden Ozeane in den Jahren 1828, 1829 und 1830 ausgeführt von Adolph Erman*, 5 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1833-48), 2:170-73.

30. The Startsev house is discussed in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 94-95.

31. See William C. Brumfield, "Asian Motifs in Eighteenth-Century Siberian Church Architecture." *The Harriman Review*, 16 (2009)3: 1-20.

32. On the historical components of Buddhist architecture in Buriatia, see M. D. Yumzhapova, "Vliianie russkoi tserkovnoi arkhitektury na buriatskoe Buddiiskoe zodchestvo (seredina XVIII—pervaia polovina XIX v.)," in V. I. Pluzhnikov, ed., *Arkhir nasledia—1999* (Moscow: Institut nasledia, 2000), 262-75. See also Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 150-77.

33. M. D. Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie buriatskikh monastirei v landshafte i ikh planirovka," in P. M. Shul'gin, ed. *Nasledie i sovremennost'*, vol. 9 (Moscow: Institut nasledia, 2002), 123.

34. T. Sergeeva, "Pochemu Mongoly poliubili Taru," *Dekorativnoe Iskusstvo*, (1995)1-2: 62.

35. For further analysis of the use of geomancy, see Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 129-30. See also *Lamaizm v Buriatii XVIII-nachala XX veka: struktura i sotsial'naia rol' kul'tovoi sistemy*, V.V. Mantatov, ed. (Novosibirsk, 1983), 157.

36. A. P. Barannikov, "Zabaikal'skie datsany," in *Materialy po etnografii. Etnograficheskii otdel Gosudarstvennogo Russkogo muzeia*. Vol. 3. (Leningrad, 1926)1:125-26.

37. Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 132-33.

38. See Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 160. As Minert points out, the Russian Orthodox Church sharply opposed this official status, which was issued primarily as a means of controlling Buddhism; but the result only increased Buddhist authority among the Buriats. For a more detailed view of relations between the tsarist government and local Buddhists, see K. M. Gerasimova, *Lamaizm i natsional'no-kolonial'naia politika tsarizma v Zabaikal'e v XIX i nachale XX v.* (Ulan-Ude, 1957). See also Vashkevich, *Lamaity v Vostochnoi Sibiri* (St. Petersburg, 1885).

39. Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 127-28. Further information on preparation for the *datsan* is provided in V.V. Mantatov, ed., *Lamaizm v Buriatii XVIII-nachala XX veka*, 157.

40. On the prototypical Buddhist forms, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 151-53. See also Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 132.

41. Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 11-12, 164.

42. Originally, the primary lamasery was the Tsongol *datsan* (not extant), situated on the Chikoi River, which flows into the Selenga River near Staroselenginsk. The Tsongol *datsan* had an elaborate wooden main temple that was constructed in

1758-1759 and still stood at the turn of the twentieth century. With its decorated porches extending from the points of the compass, the early temple at Tsongol *datsan* might have been influenced by the forms of Russian wooden churches; yet no specific evidence exists for this assumption, and the destruction of the temple itself represents a major loss for the study of Buddhist culture in Buriatia. The original Tsongol temple is discussed in Yumzhapova, "Vliianie," 268. See also Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 12 and figure 2.

43. See Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 149.

44. On the first temple at Gusinozersk *datsan*, see Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 137-38. See also N. V. Kirilov, *Datsany v Zabaikal'e, Zapiski Priamurskogo otdeliniia Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Khabarovsk, 1896), 127.

45. Plans of the original and rebuilt wooden main temple at Gusinozersk *datsan* are provided in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 97. See also Yumzhapova, "Vliianie," 266-67.

46. On the rebuilding of main temple at Gusinozersk *datsan*, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 99-103; and Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 140.

47. Information on the builders is provided in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 98.

48. On the Buddha altar, see Ts.-B. Badmazhapov, *Buddiskaia zhivopis' Buriatii* (Ulan-Ude, 1995), 8.

49. Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 106. See also A. M. Pozdnev, *Ocherki byta buddiiskikh monastirei i buddiiskogo dukhovenstva v Mongolii* (St. Petersburg, 1897), 37.

50. The functions of the various levels are explored in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 105, 154-57, 166-67. See also Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 142.

51. On the Dugan Choira temple and its educational function, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 106-07. See also V. D. Kolgushin, "Dugan choira gusinozerskogo datsana—pamiatnik khudozhestvennoi kul'tury Buriatii," in O. N. Vilkov and A. S. Moskovskii, eds., *Pamiatniki istorii i arkhitektury Sibiri* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1986), 107-16. More detailed information on the educational mission of Buriat Buddhist monasteries is presented in a study by B. B. Baradiin, "Buddiiskie monastiri," published in E. A. Khamaganova, ed., *Orient: Buddizm i Rossiia* (Saint Petersburg, 1992), 62-116. This edition also contains a brief biographical sketch of Badzar Baradiin, including information on his arrest and tragic death at the hands of the Leningrad NKVD in 1937. The first publication of Baradiin's text appeared in N. Bogdanov, *Ocherki istorii buriat-mongol'skogo naroda* (Verkhneudinsk, 1926), 109-51. See especially pages 135-43.

52. Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 108.

53. The destroyed Maidara temple is discussed in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 98; and Yumzhapova, "Razmeshchenie," 140.

54. On the Burinskii Treaty (so named for its signing on the Bura River), see E.E. Popova, *Kiakhta. Pamiatniki istorii i kul'tury* (Moscow: Soiuzreklamkultura, 1990), 5-6; and Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 40-41.

55. The founding of Kiakhta is described in Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 88-90. See also Popova, *Kiakhta*, 6-7, and Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 54-55.

36. *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, *Goroda*, 91.

57. On the altars, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 60; and Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 42. The Trinity Cathedral

was not the town's first masonry building: in the latter part of the eighteenth century, work had begun on a Merchants Court, or *gostinnyi dvor*, but without substantial results.

58. The 1870 addition is noted in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 61; and Popova, *Kiakhta*, 17.

59. On the construction of the Church of the Resurrection, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 63; Popova, *Kiakhta*, 18; and Mitypova, *Pravoslavnye khramy*, 43.

60. The Resurrection Church iconostasis is described in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 63-64, 66; and Popova, *Kiakhta*, 18-19, with archival photograph ca. 1890 by N. A. Charushin. A brief notice on the work of Razgil'deev is contained in Irina Kalinina, *Pravoslavnye khramy Irkutskoi eparkhii* (Moscow: Galart, 2000), 473.

61. A detailed analysis of the plan of the Resurrection Church is contained in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 64-65.

62. An archival photograph taken around 1940 of both Dormition Churches is reproduced in Popova, *Kiakhta*, 20. See also Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 183. A prototypical masonry example is the Church of Saint Varvara built in Moscow by Rodion Kazakov in 1796-1804. See Brumfield, *History*, p. 337.

63. The masonry Church of the Dormition is examined in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 70-71; and Popova, *Kiakhta*, 20.

64. On the growth of Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta and the evolution of town plans, see Popova, *Kiakhta*, 10-11; and Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 56-57.

65. Popova, *Kiakhta*, 13.

66. The decision to build the Gostinnyi dvor is discussed in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 66; and Popova, *Kiakhta*, 13.

67. On the trading complex in Troitskosavsk, see Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 69-70.

68. On the Lushnikov circle, see Popova, *Kiakhta*, 21-22. The house is described in Minert, *Pamiatniki*, 78-79.

69. Very little has been published on the Red Barracks, which are listed in Petunova, ed., *Gosudarstvennyi spisok*, p. 60.

70. For a general view taken of the barracks in 1913, as well as an account of the Civil War executions, see Popova, *Kiakhta*, 38. A biographic sketch of Semenov is presented in P. P. Vibe, A. P. Mikheev, and H. M. Pugacheva, eds. *Omskii istoriko-kraevedcheskii slovar'* (Moscow: Otechestvo, 1994), 233-34.

71. A brief account of the campaign against von Ungern in the Troitskosavsk-Kiakhta area is presented in Popova, *Kiakhta*, 40-41.

72. The second visit to Chita lasted almost two weeks. In addition to Kennan's account of their stay and meetings with political exiles, the book also contains sketches by Frost of log houses associated with the Decembrists in Chita. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2:128-30; 329-42.

73. For an examination of the early history of Nerchinsk, with historiographical commentary, see Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 46-62. The name "Neliudskii" comes from the Russified form for the local Tungus tribe: "Neliudei" or "Neliulei".

74. On the Evenk Tungus, see V. A. Tugolukov, *Tungusy (evenki i eveny) Srednei i Zapadnoi Sibiri* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985). The burning of the Shilka fort is discussed in Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 47. In some cases extreme deprivation led Cossacks to attack Russian supply lines. See,

for example, Aleksandr K. Borozdin, *Protopop Avvakum* (Saint Petersburg, 1898), 71-73; and Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 52.

75. See A. R. Artem'ev, "Rossii vernoe sluzhenie (Rod kniazei Gantimurovykh)," in I.G. Striuchenko, S.B. Beloglazova, G.I. Subbot, eds., *Zabytye imena* (Vladivostok: Innokent'evskii komitet, 1994), 48.

76. A summary of the Pashkov expedition is provided in Pierre Pascal, "La conquête de l'Amour. Les campagnes de Pashkov," *Revue des études slaves*, 26(1950)1:15-16. Documents related to the expedition are contained in *Dopolneniia k aktam istoricheskim*, vol.4 (Saint Petersburg, 1851), 40-41, 176, 178, 260-61. 272, 324.

77. Avvakum's description of the journey is presented in the authoritative edition of the vita of archpriest Avvakum edited by A. N. Robinson: *Zhizneopisaniiia Avvakuma i Epifaniiia* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1963), 150-58. In English see *Archpriest Avvakum: The Life written by Himself*, translated and edited by Kenneth N. Bostrom (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1979), 61-76.

78. Despite the dangers from sudden and deadly Baikal storms, Pashkov's choice, made in defiance of official instructions, was justified for a group so heavily burdened with provisions. Already in the mid-seventeenth century this became the accepted route into eastern Siberia (Dauria). See Andrei A. Titov, *Sibir 'v XVII veke* (Moscow, 1890), 30-31.

79. Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniiia Avvakuma*, 249.

80. Events surrounding the creation of what would be known as the Nerchinsk fort are examined N. P. Kradin and M. Iu. Timofeev, "O date osnovaniia Nerchinskogo ostroga," *Voprosy istorii*, (1988)1:171-74.

81. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 49.

82. Commentary on the relations between Avvakum and Pashkov is contained in Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniiia Avvakuma*, 242-43, 246, 255.

83. Avvakum himself noted the punishments inflicted on those under Pashkov's command, both at Yeniseisk and during the journey. See Robinson, *Zhizneopisaniiia Avvakuma*, 249.

84. On the reduction in numbers, see Galina A. Leont'eva, "K voprosu ob obrazovanii postoiannogo sluzhilogo naseleniia v Vostochnoi Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XVII-nachale XVIII vv. (Nerchinskii uezd)," in *Voprosy istorii sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi i kul'turnoi zhizni Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka*, 2(1968): 42.

85. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 49. See also Leont'eva, "K voprosu," 44.

86. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 49.

87. The defection of other leaders is noted in Georgii V. Melikhov, *Manch 'zhury na Severo-Vostoke (XVII v.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 67.

88. For more information on the bold, skillful demarches of Arshinskii, see Vladimir S. Miasnikov, *Imperiia Tsin i Russkoe gosudarstvo v XVII veke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 125-27. See also Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 50-51.

89. See Galina A. Leont'eva, *Zemleprokhodets Erofei Pavlovich Khabarov* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1991), 144.

90. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 104.

91. N. P. Kradin, "Krepost' Albazin. Oboronnoe stroitel'stvo na Severo-Vostoke russkogo gosudarstva v XVII veke." in *Rossiia i ATR*, 1(1992):67-79. See also Artem'ev,

Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia, 105, 277, 280.

92. On the agricultural development, see A. R. Artemev, Iu. A. Sem, A. I. Sergeev. "Khoziaistvennoe osvoenie Dal'nego Vostoka russkim naseleniem," in A.I. Krushanov, ed., *Istoriia Dal'nego Vostoka SSSR v epokhu feodalizma i kapitalizma: XVII v.-fevral' 1917 g.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 48-51.

93. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 106-7.

94. Viktor I. Shunkov, *Ocherki po istorii zemledeliia Sibiri* (XVII v.) (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1956), 221.

95. Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 108-09.

96. Vladimir S. Miasnikov, *Imperiia Tsin i Russkoe gosudarstvo v XVII veke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 250; published in English as *The Ch'ing Empire and the Russian State in the Seventeenth Century*, translated by Vic Schneiersson (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985). For commentary in English on the Treaty of Nerchinsk, see Mark Mancall, *Russia and China; their diplomatic relations to 1728* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

Recent publications on archeological excavations at the Albazin site include: Dmitrii Stepanov, "Albazin v XVII veke: voennaia i dukhovnaia krepost' Priamir'ia," *Rodina*, 12(2011):53-58; and Andrei Cherkasov, Nikolai Zaitsev, Vladimir Onishchuk, and Nikolai Sukhorukov, "Albazinskaia ekspeditsiia: Sovremennye geofizicheskie metody v issledovanii Albazinskogo ostroga," *Rodina*, 12(2011):59-63.

97. Among works on Russia's trade with China, see Clifford Foust, *Muscovite and Mandarin; Russia's trade with China and its setting, 1727-1805* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

98. The first log church of the Nerchinsk-Dormition Monastery burned in 1729. On the Church of the Dormition, with plans, see N. P. Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska XVIII-XIX vv.," *Arkhiturnoe nasledstvo*, 33 (1985):78-88.

99. See, for example, the Church of the Ascension (1698-1704) at the Ascension Monastery in Solikamsk (Ural Mountains) in William C. Brumfield, "Photographic Documentation of Architectural Monuments in the Northern Districts of Perm Province," *Visual Resources*, 18(2002): 30-31.

100. Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 81.

101. On the relocation of Nerchinsk, see Artem'ev, *Goroda i ostrogi Zabaikal'ia*, 60. 102. A more detailed discussion of the Resurrection Cathedral is contained in Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 82.

103. See Nikolai D. Muzgin, *Gorod Nerchinsk: K 325-letiiu osnovaniia goroda* (Irkutsk: Vostochno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1978).

104. On the Nerchinsk Gostinyi Dvor, with plan, see Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 82-83.

105. A first-hand account of the Nerchinsk silver mines is provided in George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2:278-318. Kennan correctly notes that the silver mines are spread over a large territory extending northward from Mongolia and not at all near to the town itself.

106. Recent research on the Decembrists in the Irkutsk and Trans-Baikal areas is presented in *Zemlia Irkutskaiia*, 5 (1996).

107. Mikhail Dmitrievich Butin, *Sibir' i ee doreformennye sudy* (Saint Petersburg: Narodnaia pol'za, 1898), 36.

108. Nikolai Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki suseki stoiat...."

Zemlia irkutskaiia, 2(1994):19.

109. Evidence provided by Leonid Boleslavich Kandinskii. See also www.kandinsky.ru.

110. The village of Biankino is now classified as "uninhabited" on the official map *Chitinskaia oblast, Aginskii buriatskii avtonomnyi okrug* (Moscow: Roskartografiia, 1994).

111. Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 19.

112. Natal'ia Gavrilova, "Sibirskii Amerikanets," *Zemlia irkutskaiia*, 12(2000): 24; Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 19-20.

113. Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 20. The impact of the Butins' far-flung retail trade is also noted in Kennan, *Siberia*, 2:324.

114. These rivercraft and barges were produced at the Butins' Nikolaevskii iron foundry. See Gavrilova, "Sibirskii amerikanets," 25; Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 22.

115. On Mikhail Butin's trip to China, see Gavrilova, "Sibirskii amerikanets," 24-25.

116. Mikhail Dmitrievich Butin, *Istoricheskii ocherk snoshenii russkikh s Kitaem* (Irkutsk, 1871), 6.

117. On the Russian Empire's subsequent economic and political moves into Manchuria, see David Wolff, "Russia Finds its Limits. Crossing Borders into Manchuria," in Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff, eds., *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East* (Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 40-54.

118. On the Butins' stake in the Darasun gold mines and the application of American mining technology, see Gavrilova, "Sibirskii amerikanets," 24-25; Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 20. The Butins' innovations are further discussed in Sergei F. Khrolenok, *Zolotopromyshlennost' Sibiri: 1832-1917: istoriko-ekonomicheskii ocherk* (Irkutsk: Izdatel'stvo Irkutskogo Universiteta, 1990), 76-77.

119. Mikhail Dmitrievich Butin, *Pis'ma iz Ameriki* (Saint Petersburg, 1872). Excerpts containing Butin's ruminations on America's growth at Russia's expense are presented in Gavrilova, "Sibirskii amerikanets," 27-28.

120. Butin, *Pis'ma iz Ameriki*, 54.

121. Mikhail Butin's philanthropic work is noted in Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 82; and Gavrilova, "Sibirskii amerikanets," 26. Butin himself mentions these activities in *Sibir' i ee doreformennye sudy*, 4, 20.

122. Kennan, usually the quintessential gentleman, is quite uncharitable toward poor Klementovich, to the point of saying that his exile would be justified by the execrable state of the hotel. See Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2:321.

123. Ibid., 2:323-24. The interior furnishings are also noted in Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 83-85.

124. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2:324.

125. These reverses included the Irkutsk fire of 1879, which destroyed warehouses and goods; a severe drought in the early 1880s, which reduced the all-important water supply at their gold works; and the loss of ships with merchandise from Odessa and Hamburg. On the financial problems of the Butin firm, see Gavrilova, "Sibirskii Amerikanets," 26; and Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 22.

126. Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, 2:17.

127. Ruposov, "Soli-zlodeiki," 26.

128. A general plan of the Butins' Nerchinsk compound is presented in Kradin, "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 85.

129. Chekhov's "Ostrov Sakhalin" was serialized in the

journal *Russkaia Mysl'* in 1893 and 1894. The first complete publication appeared in 1895. See A. P. Chekhov: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 30 vols., *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974-83), 14-15:773. A recent English edition is entitled: *A Journey to Sakhalin*, translated by Brian Reeve (Cambridge, England: I. Faulkner, 1993).

130. Chekhov's Siberian travel notes, "Iz Sibiri," appeared serially in Aleksei Suvorin's newspaper *Novoe Vremia* during the summer of 1890. See Chekhov: *Polnoe sobranie, Sochineniia*, 14-15:762.

131. Chekhov wrote the letter on board the *Ermak*, steaming down the Shilka River. Chekhov: *Polnoe sobranie, Pis'ma*, 4:118.

132. Kradin discusses the wooden houses of Nerchinsk in "Pamiatniki arkhitektury Nerchinska," 87-88.

133. Ibid., 329. At the end of the concluding sentence, Kennan added his own footnote: "The natives in Siberia known as Buriat's are nearly all Lamaists."

134. Nikolai E. Dvornichenko, *Putevoditel' po Chite: dostoprimechatel'nosti, pamiatniki i pamiatnye mesta* (Irkutsk: Vostochno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1981), 2-9.

135. The reconstruction of the Church of the Archangel Michael is discussed in L. G. Poletaeva, "Nashi dukhovnye tsennosti," in M. V. Konstantinov, *Innokent'evskie chteniia. Nauchno-prakticheskaia konferentsiia posviashchennaia 200-letiiu Innokentia Veniaminova* (Chita: ZGPU, 1998), 83.

136. For examples of northern Russian log church architecture, see William Brumfield, *Russkii sever. Svidetel'stvo Uil'iama Brumfilda* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi muzei arkhitektury im. Shchuseva and Izdatel'stvo Tri Kvadrata, 2001).

137. On the decision to retain the church as the Decembrist Museum in the post-Soviet period, see Poletaeva, "Nashi dukhovnye tsennosti," 84-85.

138. The Catholic church was originally built as a chapel in 1851 and expanded in 1898. The Catholic parish ceased to exist in 1926, and the property was given to the city's Orthodox community, which occupied the building only in 1944. One Orthodox structure that survived the Soviet period is the Missionary School (1889), but the other buildings in this complex—known as the Archbishop's Legation and located at the edge of Cathedral Square—were destroyed. It should be noted that the number of Orthodox churches in Chita before the revolution was relatively small. The physical destruction of Russian Orthodoxy during the Soviet period in Chita can be partially explained by the close support given by local church hierarchs to the counterrevolutionary regime of Ataman Semenov during the Russian civil war. See V. I. Vasilevskii, "Iz istorii Zabaikal'skoi eparkhii v gody beloi gosudarstvennosti," in M. V. Konstantinov, *Innokent'evskie chteniia*, 80-82.

139. See Wolff, "Russia Finds its Limits," 44.

140. I am indebted to the Center for the Preservation of the Historical Cultural Heritage of Chita oblast', and its director, Tatiana Zherebtsova, for providing me with a number of these early twentieth-century views. Specialists at the center also shared archival information for a number of the building annotations that follow in this chapter.

141. *Russia, with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking; handbook for travellers by Karl Baedeker* (Leipzig: K. Baedeker; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 534.

142. Most of the leaders of the "Chita Republic" of 1905 were executed. One who survived was V. K. Kurnatovskii, a lifelong revolutionary who was personally acquainted with Vladimir Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaja. Although captured by Meller-Zakomelskii and sentenced to death by Rennenkampf, Kurnatovskii escaped and ultimately made his way to Paris, where he died in poverty in 1912.

143. An analysis of the design of apartment buildings in Saint Petersburg during the latter half of the nineteenth century is contained in Andrei L. Punin, *Arkhitektura Peterburga sere diny XIX veka* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990), 250-77; and William Craft Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 1-47.

144. Information on these and other early twentieth-century buildings in Chita is drawn from the archives of Center for the Preservation of the Historical Cultural Heritage of Chita oblast'.

145. On the Vtorov firm's commercial architecture in Moscow, see Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism*, 285-87.

146. A detailed account of the Siberian conflict is contained in Jonathan D. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia: the Anti-Bolshevik Government of Admiral Kolchak, 1918-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also Jamie Bisher, *White Terror: Cossack Warlords of the Trans-Siberian* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005); and James William Morely, *The Japanese Thrust into Siberia. 1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

WILLIAM CRAFT BRUMFIELD is Professor of Slavic studies at Tulane University and Honorary Fellow of the Russian Academy of the Fine Arts. He was assistant professor at Harvard University (1974-80), and has held visiting appointments at the Universities of Wisconsin (1973-74) and Virginia (1985-86).

He is the author and photographer of numerous works on Russian architecture: *Gold in Azure: One Thousand Years of Russian Architecture* (1983); *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture* (1991); *A History of Russian Architecture* (1993), *Lost Russia: Photographing the Ruins of Russian Architecture* (1995); and *Landmarks of Russian Architecture: A Photographic Survey* (1997). He edited and contributed chapters to *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams* (1990), *Christianity and the Arts in Russia* (1991), and *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History* (1993). He has also published twenty-two books in Russia devoted primarily to that country's regional architectural heritage.

Brumfield has spent a total of ten years in Russia. His photographs of Russian architecture, exhibited in the U.S., Russia, France, and Canada, are part of the collection of the Photographic Archives at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. He has received fellowship and grant support from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Humanities Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities, IREX, the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies (Woodrow Wilson Center), the American Council of Teachers of Russian, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, the Kress Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

In April 2002 Brumfield was elected to the State Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Sciences. In May 2006 he was elected Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of the Arts (Российская академия художеств), founded in 1757.